



# *International* **crossroads** FALL 2001

## **KYOTO** **CULTURAL CAPITAL**

MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE COLLEGE  
RYUKOKU UNIVERSITY

境内禁煙

NO SMOKING





# Welcome

By Dr. Chad Stebbins

Director of the Institute of  
International Studies

Welcome to the fourth annual edition of the *International Crossroads* magazine! The inaugural issue, published in 1998, featured 70 stories written by students in France, Germany, Senegal, and Taiwan. The 1999 issue contained 33 stories by students in 10 countries — France, Germany, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Russia, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand, and China. For 2000, students from the University of Vienna produced the entire issue of *International Crossroads* — titled “Very Vienna.”

The purpose of *International Crossroads* has always been threefold: to dispel stereotypes as we get to know students from other countries as individuals, to catch the social nuances of life in the varying cultures of the world, and to offer student journalists a broader audience with which to communicate.

The genesis of “Kyoto: Cultural Capital” began in September 2000 with a trip to three universities in Japan by College President Julio León and a few others from Missouri Southern. Dr. Itsuyo Higashinaka, director of the International Center at Ryukoku University in Kyoto, and Associate Director Shigeo Suzuki paid a return visit to the College in March 2001. I picked our two guests up at their hotel one evening and during the ride to dinner presented them with a copy of “Very Vienna.” They seemed to be quite impressed with the publication, and Dr.

Higashinaka even suggested that the next issue could be called “Very Kyoto.” Knowing that Southern would be celebrating the Japan Semester that Fall and that an issue of *International Crossroads* devoted to Japanese history and culture would enrich our students, I quickly accepted Dr. Higashinaka’s “offer.”

Upon his return to Japan, Dr. Higashinaka went to work in determining whether students at Ryukoku University would be able to write enough articles — in English, no less — to fill an entire publication devoted to Kyoto. With the help of Professor Michael Lazarin and

arranged for two photographers, Shoji Shimizu and Kahoring Living, to take pictures to accompany the articles. When the hefty package arrived on campus, Rhonda Clark, publications manager for *The Chart* and *Crossroads*, took over. She and the small *Crossroads* staff worked with Michael Hailey, the College’s graphics coordinator, to design the 60-page issue of *International Crossroads*. Kim Gray, assistant to the director of the Institute of International Studies, also helped with the editing on this end, and Jean Campbell, *Crossroads* budget director, provided other assistance.

So the issue you’re holding in your hands really was a collaborative effort between Ryukoku and Southern. It’s this type of cooperation between the universities of the world that we envisioned when we established *International Crossroads* in 1998. Copies will be mailed to Kyoto and universities with established journalism programs so that the student writers from Ryukoku actually will be reaching a global audience. And I’m sure

our own students will enjoy learning a little more about the Land of the Rising Sun.

Please direct your comments or questions to me at [stebbins-c@mail.mssc.edu](mailto:stebbins-c@mail.mssc.edu) or to Dr. Higashinaka at [BZL02515@nifty.ne.jp](mailto:BZL02515@nifty.ne.jp).

Any international school or student that would like to contribute articles to next year’s *International Crossroads* should contact me as well.



Dr. Itsuyo Higashinaka, director of the International Center at Ryukoku University in Kyoto, and College President Julio León present the signed agreement between Missouri Southern and Ryukoku in March 2001.

Andrew Royal, International Programs Advisor at Ryukoku, he soon committed the university to the massive project. Graduate students and a few young lecturers with command of the English language wrote most of the articles. Nobumichi Kawata and Eiko Shiota served as student editors on the Ryukoku side.

After extensive editing, Mr. Royal mailed the articles to Southern in August. Dr. Higashinaka also





## ARTICLES

### KYOTO

- 2 Kyoto: A City for Students  
By Yasuya Harada
- 4 Ten Reasons to Live in Kyoto  
By Andrew Royal
- 6 An Excursion to the Kyoto Botanical Garden: What Does It Mean to Study in Kyoto?  
By Shinji Matsumoto
- 8 Making Friends in Japan: Friendship Formation Between Japanese & Foreigners  
By Noriko Hattori, Yuko Yano, & Nozomi Tanaka
- 12 What to Eat In Japan: Anything But Fish?  
By Andrew Royal
- 14 Grid Streets of Kyoto  
By Eiko Shiota

### TRADITION

- 16 Bon Festival & Five Chinese Characters Lit on the Hillside  
By Nobumichi Kawada
- 18 1867 Kyoto  
By Kiyonori Okabe
- 20 Kyoto Dialect  
By Norimasa Nomura
- 22 Why Has *The Tale of Genji* Been Read for 1,000 Years?  
By Hiroko Okamoto
- 24 Higashikujo, a Korean Town in Kyoto  
By Shinya Himeda
- 26 The Traditional Beauty of the Japanese Maiko  
By Naoko Kanata

### RELIGION

- 28 Temples in Kyoto  
By Hong Liu
- 31 How to be Ordained as a Buddhist Monk  
By Masafumi Moriwaki
- 32 Shinran: The Pure Land Saint During the Period of the Japanese Renaissance in Buddhism  
By Koji Hiramoto

# International Crossroads

### ART

- 36 Kabuki, a Traditional Theatrical Art Born in Kyoto  
By Matsuda Mitsue
- 43 A Japanese View of American Landscape  
By Mitsuru Sanada
- 44 *Shichinin no Samurai (The Seven Samurai) & The Magnificent Seven*  
By Yoshiya Nishi
- 46 Japanese Origami  
By Eiko Shiota
- 48 Sign Language in Kyoto  
By Hiroyuki Shimada
- 50 Haiku & Paintings by Buson  
By Yuki Sawa

### BUSINESS

- 52 A New Phase of the Use of Computers: A Practical Application for English Learning & Teaching in Japan  
By Hirokazu Nishida
- 54 Globalizing a Capital City: Dialectic of Old & New in Kyoto  
By Shinya Matsuoka
- 58 Traditional Business Management—Functions of Corporate Staff  
By Yoshihiko Takaoka

Editorial Staff, Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan:  
Nobumichi Kawata and Eiko Shiota

Photographers, Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan:  
Shoji Shimizu and KahoringLiving

Editorial Staff, Missouri Southern State College, Joplin, Missouri:  
Cameron Bohannon, Natosha Rogers, Desara Kilby-Short, and  
Dale Benfield, Jr. — Associate Editors

Michael Hailey — Graphic Design

Jean Campbell — Adviser

Rhonda Clark — Publications Manager

Cover Photo: The front gate of the shrine, Heian Jingu —  
Shoji Shimizu.

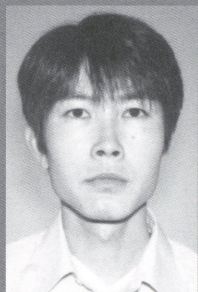
Inset: Kataoka Shimanojo, a kabuki actor.



# KYOTO:

## A city for students

By Yasuya Harada



When you hear the name Kyoto, what image do you have in mind? You will think that it is a city in Japan that is famous for a long history, a lot of beautiful temples, and

geisha girls. I often see travelers visit the temples and take photos. There are some cities in Japan that are famous for temples, for example Nara, Kamakura, and Kyoto. However, no city except Kyoto has another side, that is, Kyoto is a city for students. There are dozens of universities and colleges in Kyoto, and it is said that the number of students account for 1/10 of the population (I have never counted the number). If the students of vocational colleges are added, the percentage increases further.

### Secondhand Books

First, students need many books for their studies. Do they buy new technical books in bookstores at high prices? Of course they will buy them when unexpected necessity arises, however, many of them (including myself) go to secondhand bookstores to buy books inexpensively. There are many secondhand bookstores in Kyoto, and we can't do without them. Many secondhand bookstores are in Hyakumanben, where Kyoto University is located, because Kyoto University is one of the largest

universities in Japan.

Many times a year, almost all secondhand bookstores in Kyoto gather in a place and hold large secondhand book fairs. At these fairs, individuals can buy books cheaper than at expensive fixed prices. Not only students but also researchers come to these fairs, and the site becomes something of a state of chaos every time. It is

*There are dozens of universities and colleges in Kyoto, and it is said that the number of students account for 1/10 of the population (I have never counted the number). If the students of vocational colleges are added, the percentage increases further.*

difficult to find desired books because of the congestion, but books that usually lie in storage are sold. These fairs, held at regular intervals, are indispensable for students.

These days, thanks to the Internet, secondhand bookstores cooperate together and throw their stock on the World Wide Web. Shoppers can quickly check which bookstores have the books they want and place orders on the spot, and within a few days, the books are delivered.

### Coffee Shops

Second, another reason why Kyoto is convenient for students, is that there are numerous coffee shops. Common coffee shops close at 8 p.m., but some of this author's favorite shops close at 10 p.m. or thereabouts.

Furthermore, some shops stay open day and night. At

these coffee shops, one can not only



This page: a bookstore in Kyoto. Facing page: Top, a Kyoto coffee shop. Bottom, a street leading to Kiyomizu temple.

Yasuya Harada





Yasuya Harada

drink coffee, but also talk with friends for hours.

You may think we would be better off gathering in someone's room, but the atmosphere these shops create is important. My group likes old shops where the lighting is dim and jazz or classical music quietly play. It is very pleasant, and we talk and discuss quietly in the atmosphere. Of course, I often go to these shops alone, and that is another charm to experience.

Other students and even professors also frequent the coffee shops. I often see a professor and his students sitting around a table talking about his specialty. Sometimes a professor is guiding his students' theses by opening some books. Moreover, the coffee shop managers consider this acceptable and allow it. If we do the same thing in a coffee shop in another city, the owner will look displeased by our long stay. In short, this usage of coffee shops is a common and everyday experience in Kyoto.

By the way, I am living in Kyoto now. It is only natural that I am surrounded by many coffee shops, and I see the value of them when I am not in Kyoto. Sometimes I travel to other cities, one or two times a season, and am always in trouble

because I cannot find good coffee shops. I finally find a few, but they usually close at 8 p.m. at the latest. Why does the station where even shinkansens (bullet trains) stop have no coffee shops that stay open late in the evening?

The coffee shop, which is used as a meeting place, is a part of our life. It is a place to talk and discuss, at one's leisure, for hours. These are the characteristics of the coffee shops in Kyoto.

### One large shopping mall

Finally, in the center of Kyoto, the streets are laid in a grid pattern as in New York, and some streets have arcades. These arcades are connected as one large shopping mall (we often call this area Shijo or Kawaramachi from the street names in the area). One can buy almost everything they need in any weather — clothing, accessories, bags, CDs, and more. Also, there are bowling alleys, movie theaters, and large bookstores.

As I live nearby, I have noticed that the shops on the streets have begun to change. For the past few years, the target customers for these shops have changed to persons in their late teens and 20s. For this

reason, clothing stores keep increasing, and the recent trend in these shops is obviously aimed at these groups. Of course, the change is not only in clothing stores but other stores as well.

In Shijo, there are many passersby day and night, and many look like university or college students. Shijo is known as a famous amusement area, and people come here from other cities to shop and enjoy. Those who have enough free time in the day may be students, so it is not surprising that this area is crowded with students. Also, it's undeniable that students are the main customers here and contribute greatly to the businesses. A few years ago, a large station building was built at Kyoto Station, and many people go there to shop, but students still lean toward Shijo.

Kyoto provides comfort to students, and if there were no students, Kyoto would not be Kyoto any longer.



Shoji Shimizu



# Ten reasons to live in Kyoto

By Andrew Royal

## One: A Unique Place In The World

At the top of any list, describing Kyoto must be a consideration of the uniqueness of the Kyoto area. At no other place in the world will you find the same, or even similar, sights to the ones in this area. From the fantastic Golden Pavilion with its shiny golden exterior, to the extensive garden complex of the Ryoanji Temple area, to the huge stage of the Kiyomizu Temple and its breathtaking view of the Kyoto skyline, Kyoto is full of attractions that one can only find here. With the Imperial Palace and villas, the two huge Honganji temples that serve as the center of Japanese Buddhism, and many other sites too numerous to list here, Kyoto is, without question, a unique place in this world that deserves a visit.

## Two: Long History

How many other places have been the national capital for more than 1,000 years? Not many, I would expect, and none in the state of Missouri for sure. Kyoto's long history as the capital of Japan provides many fun adventures and highlights for a stay here. Have you ever visited a palace that was built in the eighth century? You have the chance in Kyoto. Have you ever



watched or participated in festivals that have been held annually for centuries? You can in Kyoto. Literature fans can visit the sights that served as the settings of some of Japan's most famous works. One of Japan's most famous tales of love and adventure, "The Tale of Genji," as well as the saga of the rise and fall of a great samurai family as depicted in "The Tale of the Heike," take place in the Kyoto area. More recently, much of Arthur Golden's bestselling book, *Memoirs of a Geisha*, takes place in Kyoto's historic geisha, maiko, and tea house district known as Gion. Kurosawa Akira film fans might recognize scenes at Kyoto's Heian Temple from his classic film, *Rashomon*. Everywhere you turn in Kyoto, you are likely to find an element of Kyoto's distinguished history, from little-known corners of historic significance to world famous sights and treasures.

## Three: Convenient Public Transportation

Kyoto's extensive system of public transportation makes for a fast and convenient way to get around the many sites of the city. With frequently running subways, trains, and public buses, even the newest arrivals to Kyoto can easily manage

to get around town without a struggle. Station maps and signs are written in Japanese and English, and sometimes even Chinese and Korean. Taxis are plentiful, and most of the drivers can understand at least some English. Finally, for residents of Kyoto, the simple grid-like layout of the city streets makes it a great place to travel by bicycle.

## Four: Just The Right Size

Japan may be famous for its large, crowded cities, but Kyoto, being smaller than both Tokyo and Osaka, is just about the right size for anything you want to do. Tokyo is a huge, sprawling mess by anybody's standards, and Osaka is generally considered a concrete jungle where you might have some fun, but you wouldn't really like to live. Kyoto has managed to keep its pleasant, at-home atmosphere intact, despite its advanced infrastructure and high technology. You can find plenty of quiet neighborhoods, some with residential neighborhoods, and others with temples, shrines, gardens, cafés, and teashops. However, you can also find exciting nightlife, like in the Sanjo and Shijo area, with its restaurants, stores, and clubs to keep both the young and young-at-heart content.



**Five: A College Town**

Forty-eight colleges and junior colleges have campuses in Kyoto. This means that despite its history, despite its elegance and its ambiance, Kyoto is a college town. What this means to the college student coming to Kyoto is that there are going to be plenty of opportunities to have fun while here. Student-oriented organizations are active and successful at bringing Japanese and international students together from schools all over the city. Sporting contests, parties, music concerts, and many other events are held throughout the year to give the student a chance to relax and let loose. Because of the large number of young people around town, the city is charged with a vibrant, anything-can-happen feel, making Kyoto an invigorating place to live.

**Six: Cheap Housing**

Due to the large numbers of college-aged students in the Kyoto area, rental apartments are both cheap and available. Average Kyoto housing costs are cheaper than other big cities in Japan, and even when compared to big cities in the United States, Kyoto is very affordable. Average rent for one-room apartments is 40,000 yen, or less than \$400 U.S. per month. University owned dormitories and student apartments have rents as low as 15,000 yen, or \$125 U.S. per month. This is cheap when compared to housing costs at many college towns around the United States.

**Seven: New Economy Hotbed**

Many students today are on the lookout for a way to be a part of the next big thing, technology-wise, and Kyoto is a smart place to start. Kyoto has a good balance of well-established local companies, global leaders in growing industries, and close ties between universities and corporations to encourage new venture growth. With strong local

companies like Kyocera, Rohm, and Nintendo already taking leading roles in their respective global industries, Kyoto is now working to further its status as a new economy hotbed with efforts like the Kyoto Research Park, various venture incubators, and research and extension centers connected to the many universities.

The area has established an increasing number of new companies that look to jumpstart the somewhat sluggish Japanese economy. For students and professionals alike, Kyoto is a good place to find a niche in the new economy.

**Eight: Easy Access To Other Exciting Cities**

Kyoto's location in the center of the exciting Kansai region of western Japan makes it a great starting place for adventures to other nearby cities. The international port city of Kobe is an hour away by train. Osaka, the lively, fun-loving city known for its neon lights, tasty foods, and exciting nightlife, is 30 minutes away by train as well. Nara is another interesting destination a short trip from Kyoto. Japan's largest lake, Lake Biwa, is 10 minutes away from Kyoto Station by train. Using Kyoto as a base, there are fun adventures waiting in any direction you choose to travel.

**Nine: Lots Of Nature**

Surrounded by low-lying mountains on its northern, eastern, and western sides, Kyoto is literally surrounded by nature. From any point in the city, you are no more than 30 minutes away from the fresh air of the mountains with extensive hiking trails to help you on your journey into the colorful getaways outside of town.

Each distinct season gives Kyoto

both a different look and feel. Mild winters occasionally blanket the city with a peaceful white cover. Summers are bearable temperature wise, and aren't too long, either. The best seasons in Kyoto, though, are spring and fall.

With the spring comes the flood of soft pink cherry blossom trees blooming throughout the city. Fall brings the colorful autumn foliage, and both seasons are great for hiking, biking, touring, and just enjoying the many natural surroundings of the Kyoto area. The Arashiyama area of northern Kyoto has been a favorite scenic spot for centuries.

**Ten: Ryukoku University**

Finally, and perhaps most important of all, a great reason to live in Kyoto is because it is the home of Ryukoku University. Ryukoku was founded in Kyoto in 1639 and has grown over its 360-year history in both size and scope. Some 20,000 currently enrolled students choose from seven different faculties, or departments, with undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as a junior college. International students may be interested in the intensive Japanese language program at Ryukoku, called the Japanese Culture and Language Program.

Students can participate in one of more than 150 student organizations. Inexpensive student dormitories, on campus student health centers, and the friendly, multilingual staff

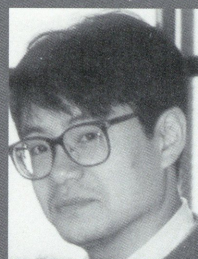
*At no other place  
in the world will  
you find the same,  
or even similar,  
sights to the ones  
in this area.*

all help to make Ryukoku a great place to study. Ryukoku's extensive ties to the Kyoto area provide excellent support for the international students that choose to come to live in Kyoto.



# An excursion to the Kyoto Botanical Garden: What does it mean to study in Kyoto?

By Shinji Matsumoto



The Kyoto Botanical Garden is a 10-minute bus ride from Bukkyo University where I teach English literature as a full-time assistant professor. Do not

imagine, however, that our university is located in the mountainous regions surrounding the city of Kyoto. If you go to the Kyoto Botanical Garden from Ryukoku University, Omiya Campus, take the underground at Kyoto Station nearby and you will get there in 15 minutes.

As is well known, the city of Kyoto is not only a historic place but also a highly modernized town. Bukkyo University is situated in the northwestern part of Kyoto, while Ryukoku University, Omiya Campus, is in the southwestern part. Although both universities are situated in the midst of many buildings and houses and beside busy streets, they have easy access to historic places such as temples and shrines.

It is often mentioned as one of the characteristics of Kyoto that once you go inside a temple, you will immediately forget the heavy traffic that surrounds it. That is, you will find yourself secluded from the outside world. This sense of seclusion can be found at the Kyoto Botanical Garden as well.

In my English Literature Seminar for fourth-year students, we were reading Thomas Hardy's poems. His poems deal with various subjects such as family, his first wife Emma, love and death, nature, himself. Among these subjects, I think

"nature" is rather difficult to understand because most of my students and myself live in urban areas, or more exactly, residential areas. We have no experience living in the heart of nature.

How can we imagine the nature portrayed in Hardy's poems? Take, for example, the earliest of his surviving poems, "Domicilium," which means "home" or "dwelling place" in Latin. While this poem, as the title indicates, depicts the home where he was born and raised, it gives little to picture the house itself. Consequently, it is impossible to imagine the inside or the outside of the house. Instead, the poem depicts what the nature, especially plants, surrounding the house looked like in his day, and also what it looked like in his grandmother's day.

Thus, I suggested that we first should be more or less familiar with an environment similar to what Hardy portrays in the poem in order to appreciate it.

As for me, I had a chance to see Hardy's birthplace in Dorchester, England, several years ago, so it is rather easy for me to visualize the scene depicted in the poem. I thought it would be rather difficult for my students to visualize. In fact, we usually read Hardy's poems in my small office, surrounded by books instead of plants. Thus, we decided to go to the Kyoto Botanical Garden to appreciate the beauty of nature.

The garden is not far from the university. We can go there, walk around, have lunch, and come back within two hours. I hoped that this excursion would be a good chance

to experience nature, which might lead to a better understanding of Hardy's poems. Also, it would be a chance for us to promote further friendship, for, as some of my students said, it was like a primary school excursion.

The Kyoto Botanical Garden opened in 1924, and took seven years to construct. After World War II, the American occupation forces occupied it for 12 years. It reopened in 1961 with renovation and became a place for relaxation and cultural enjoyment. With a series of refurbishments, which added areas like the Japanese Grove in 1970 and the Western Garden in 1981, the



Shinji Matsumoto

Kyoto Botanical Garden has been a representative botanical garden of Japan, both in name and reality.

Roughly speaking, Kyoto Botanical Garden is divided into two parts, the northern half and the southern. In the latter, one can enjoy the figurative arts with a garden of seasonal flowers, a greenhouse of tropical flowers and trees, a rose garden, a garden with a fountain, and a waterfall. While in the former, one can encounter the natural beauty of Japan in an area where



various kinds of plants of the Japanese mountains thrive in a condition close to the original, and an area with Japanese cherries, Japanese apricots, irises, bamboos, and conifers.

More information about the Kyoto Botanical Garden can be accessed on its Web site, [www.pref.kyoto.jp/intro/plant/index.html](http://www.pref.kyoto.jp/intro/plant/index.html).

Unfortunately, the site is available only in Japanese, but one can take pleasure in the photographs.

It was one day during the rainy season when our class went to the Kyoto Botanical Garden. We had been worried that it would rain, but, by good fortune, the weather was fine on that day. We went around the northern part of the garden, as the reason for our visit was to mainly see the beauty of

nature rather than the artificial beauty of manmade flower gardens.

Entering the northern gate, we walked along the path that ran through a grove and arrived at a large field of grass, encircled by high trees. The field is said to be 15,000 meters wide.

When we looked up while sitting on the grass, all we could see was the blue sky and a skyline of trees, not buildings. When we looked around, what we could see were the young and old who were enjoying the field, and those trees that we were unable to identify. Looking up and around, we felt as if we were in a completely different place from the city of Kyoto; for some time we forgot the fact that we were still in our city.

We had often passed by the front gate of the botanical garden by car or bus, but none of us had entered the garden for a long time. If I

remember correctly, I had not visited the garden since a primary school excursion more than 25 years ago. One of my students, Yuki, who was born in Kyoto and has been living there for 21 years, said it was the first time she had visited the Kyoto Botanical Garden. None of us expected the botanical garden nearby could give us such an impression one might feel as when in the temples in Kyoto — the sense of seclusion from the outside world.

My students shared their impressions of the Kyoto Botanical Garden. Noriko said she could relax, surrounded by the trees; Tetsuro, who had been busy job hunting, said he felt relieved to see nature. Maiko suggested that nature is indispensable for humankind

because it makes us gentle and mild. Yuki realized that she was fortunate to live in Kyoto, for it has the botanical garden where she could feel small happiness, and besides, the garden is easily accessible because of the well-established public transportation of Kyoto.

We left the Kyoto Botanical Garden after having lunch and hanging around for two hours. We had been planning to leave earlier, because some of us had to go back to the university for classes. I also had a meeting to attend, but stayed at the garden a bit too long. To tell the truth, I was 15 minutes late for the meeting. I think I do not have to explain the reason why we lingered a

little longer.

I do not know yet if we have accomplished the first aim of our visit to the garden, that is, deepening the understanding of Hardy's poems. That will become clear when my students submit their term papers. Anyway, I can say that nature has something to impress us with, and that it has certainly fascinated those of us who live in urban areas.

On this excursion, we happened to find that the Kyoto Botanical Garden near our university is a nice place to visit and relax. Compared with Tokyo or Osaka, Kyoto is indeed a small city, but this smallness certainly makes it possible to find something unexpected within close range. We are sure that we will come across some other places more interesting and wonderful in Kyoto, and we are really hoping to do that.

We usually study on our small campus, but the city of Kyoto can also be our campus. You can acquire something different outside campus, just as we have learned something of what nature is like in the Kyoto Botanical Garden. It depends highly on you as to how you use the town as a campus. Who knows what you will find studying in Kyoto? This kind of unexpectedness may well be one of the characteristics of Kyoto that I think is "very Kyoto."

*It is often mentioned as one of the characteristics of Kyoto that once you go inside a temple, you will immediately forget the heavy traffic that surrounds it. That is, you will find yourself secluded from the outside world. This sense of seclusion can be found at the Kyoto Botanical Garden as well.*



Shinji Matsumoto

*Facing page: Students visit the Kyoto Botanical Garden. Above: A sense of the garden's size is depicted in this photo where the author's colleague traverses an area.*





# Making friends in Japan:

## Friendship formation between Japanese & foreigners

By Noriko Hattori, Yuko Yano, Nozomi Tanaka

### Introduction

Why is it so hard to make Japanese friends? It seems this is a question many exchange students and other non-Japanese often ask. Japanese students also often experience similar feelings while studying abroad. A group of six students in the Intercultural Discussion class at Ryukoku University decided to try to find some answers to the question. In this article, the authors, who were part of this group, discuss their reflections and the results of their research and try to provide some practical insight.

First we will describe the research and provide some background about Japanese culture. After that, we will discuss some of the results of our questionnaire and try to offer advice for visiting students with regard to making friends in Japan.

### About the Questionnaire

In order to make a questionnaire, we interviewed foreign and Japanese students to determine some areas to inquire about in our questionnaire. A few of the questions gave us the most interesting results. These questions relate to 1) the amount of time it takes to form a friendship; 2) whether people are more likely to make friends meeting individually or as part of a group; 3) the age range among which one can develop friendships; and 4) tendencies in cross-gender friendship formation.

In order to analyze the data, we divided the results into three categories: Japanese, Asians (other than Japanese), and Westerners. The majority of the Asian students were from the People's Republic of China, others were from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Malaysia, and Chinese Mongolia. Among the Westerners, the respondents were from Australia, Germany, the United States, Canada, Britain, New Zealand, and others identified themselves as Hispanic and European.

### Characteristics of Japanese Culture

Before we start to discuss our research, we would like you to know something about the social and cultural characteristics of Japan. We hope it will help you to understand our research, and make you feel more at ease if you have a chance to visit Japan.

First, it is important to understand that Japan is a collectivist culture which means that there is a great deal of attention paid to the groups that one belongs to, and to the feelings of their members. Among the strongest group affiliations are family, clubs, school (and later, company), and nation.

Maintaining the integrity of the group receives much attention. Understanding this will help one to understand other key values such as harmony, formality, and modesty. The concept of "harmony," or *wa*, is strongly emphasized in Japan, and for that reason, avoiding conflict is considered important. This accounts for some aspects of Japanese



behavior and communication style, for instance, euphemistic expressions for saying “no.” Japanese tend to avoid refusing directly because it seems too harsh and cold. In other words, it sometimes can disturb the peace of the community. Another way of avoiding conflict and keeping relations going smoothly is by maintaining proper form. Japanese culture tends to pay a lot of attention to form. It is a high-context culture — there is a lot of shared understanding about what should or should not be done in certain situations. Because of a high level of shared assumptions, a lot of information can often be communicated with a few words.

The emphasis on form also means that people will usually start relationships with others from a more formal position and only gradually begin to reveal personal information. We believe this is one reason Japanese take a longer time to form close relationships than Westerners do. Modesty in Japan means having respect for others and humbling oneself. It also implies not being too self-assertive and maintaining a sense of gratitude for the efforts and good intentions of others. If you are too assertive, you may sometimes be considered to be conceited and thoughtless. Therefore, restraint, or *enryo*, has become a key value in Japanese society (in the Japanese communication style, people frequently start a conversation with a comment about the last time they met, often thanking the other person).

These values are seen especially in certain more formal situations, like business or when one talks to older people. The greater the age difference, the more marked the formality.

College students are considered one of the least formal segments of Japanese society. However, they may still seem highly concerned about proper form and demeanor for

maintaining relationships when seen by people from low-context cultures. Low-context cultures are those with fewer shared assumptions. Consequently, they require a greater amount of explicit communication in order to transmit meanings, and can rely less on fixed forms as a basis for maintaining relationships. Among all the things that are

*Why is it so hard to make Japanese friends? It seems this is a question many exchange students and other non-Japanese often ask. Japanese students also often experience similar feelings while studying abroad. A group of six students in the Intercultural Discussion class at Ryukoku University decided to try to find some answers to the question.*

determined by context, there are also specific contexts in which the formality is partially or totally abandoned. For instance, in Japan, people often have a “drinking party,” or “go out for a drink.” This creates a relaxed and carefree atmosphere in which people can express their *honne*, which means one’s real intentions or true feelings, as opposed to *tatemae*, which is a socially acceptable opinion usually expressed in public. *Tatemae* is seen as a social skill, and is closely related to the core values of maintaining harmony and avoiding conflict.

## The amount of time it takes to form a friendship

For this question, we received the following four responses: can make friends immediately; after meeting a few times; a few weeks; and a few months.

The majority of Asians, and almost two-thirds of Japanese (64.2%), answered that they need at least a few meetings until they become friends with somebody. However, in contrast, nearly half of Westerners said they become friends with somebody immediately. Interestingly, a significant number of Asian people say they need a few months to form a friendship.

It can be said that Asian people (including Japanese) need more time to feel comfortable with somebody whom they do not know, and take longer to become friends with someone than Western people do. As mentioned above, since Asian people value formality more strongly than Westerners, this influences the amount of time it takes them to form a friendship. Forming a friendship or other close relationship requires establishing the proper context, in other words, a relaxed and carefree situation. This amount of time it takes to begin sharing personal information may also be an important factor in the length of time it takes to form a friendship.

## Whether people are more likely to make friends, meeting individually or as part of a group.

Four responses were given for this question: 1) one to one; 2) you, as a part of group, meet one new person; 3) you, by yourself, meet a number of new people; and 4) you, as a part of group, meet a number of new people.

All of the groups said that the most likely situation for developing a friendship is “one to one.” Although all groups are answering the same question here, we suspect that the





understanding of it may be somewhat different. Remember that in the collectivist Japanese society, people are trained not to seek attention and not to stand out in a way that might make others feel inferior or uncomfortable. In general, most Japanese feel somewhat uncomfortable getting too much attention drawn to themselves.

Research also shows that when people feel anxious, they also feel less effective in relationships. So, we understand the Japanese response to this question to mean that after they have made an initial acquaintance, most likely as part of a group, they are best able to form friendships when meeting on a one-to-one basis. This understanding is supported by the fact that few Japanese (9.6%) answered, "you, by yourself, meet a number of new people." More than twice as many Westerners (22.2%) chose this answer. The above notwithstanding, we were surprised at the fact that more than two thirds of the Japanese chose "one to one" for this question. This made us wonder whether, in spite of being a group-oriented culture, Japanese people prefer a one-to-one situation for forming friendships because it is easier to share personal information with an individual than with a group.

### **Which is the greatest difference in age, which you can have, and still become friends with someone?**

Our research also showed that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of the three groups regarding the possible range of age difference between friends. Among the Japanese, the largest group (35%) of those who answered said one-three years, with less than a quarter answering 11 or more years. Of the Westerners who answered this question, none answered one-three years, and 89% answered 11 or more years. Among the Asian

group, the largest group answered four-six years.

Asian people have a tendency to restrict the age range within which they make friends. This is probably due in part to the longstanding influence of the Confucian tradition throughout Northeast Asia. Confucian teachings emphasize hierarchy, and establishes clear distinctions and obligations between those who are older and those who are younger.

Practically speaking, even if Japanese are communicating with their elders outside of a formal situation, they are still sensitive to the age difference. Japanese use honorific terms and praise elders in order to be liked and are careful not to be disliked by them. If Japanese are not respectful toward their elders, it can be difficult to survive socially in communities, clubs, offices, schools, etc. That is why there is a strong tendency to distinguish elders from friends. We can relax more easily with people who are the same age as us and have similar ways of thinking or interests, and can disclose more personal information.

### **What percentage of your friends belongs to the opposite sex? Which of following make up your group?**

Nearly half of the Japanese respondents answered that opposite-sex friends made up only 11-30% of their friends.

### **Conclusion**

We have tried to provide some useful background on Japanese society in order to help the readers understand the issues surrounding our research. Then, based on our research, we examined the formation of intercultural friendships in Japan in terms of four variables: time, age, group versus individual interaction, and gender.

The results suggest that in the collectivistic societies of Asia, including Japan, it may take longer to form a friendship than in Western societies, which tend to be more individualistic. If our speculation that Japanese are mentally making a distinction between meeting someone (in a group situation) and making friends on a one-to-one basis is accurate, then the length of time required to make friends would be even longer than the research suggests. The question of how exchange students and other visitors can initially become acquainted with Japanese would then become significant.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that this is indeed a problem for many foreign students who go to class primarily with other exchange students, and often live in some sort of international housing. Some international students have overcome this problem by joining university clubs, or "circles." Others have sought to make Japanese friends through activities sponsored by university international centers, and yet others have sought out classes where they will be able to study together with Japanese students. This is obviously easier when a student has a high level of Japanese proficiency, but some universities are offering classes where Japanese and non-Japanese students can study together. The key point is to create the situation where there will be contact with Japanese students, which will allow some sort of affiliation as a basis for forming a relationship.

### **Reference**

Gudykunst, William B., and Tsukasa Nishida, (2000). "Anxiety, uncertainty, and perceived effectiveness of communication across relationships and cultures." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* Vol. 25(1), January 2001, 55-71.









# What to eat in Japan:

## *Anything but fish?*

By Andrew Royal

### *The Sushi Syndrome*

For many first time visitors to Japan, a major area of concern is what to eat. A seemingly popular misconception is that Japanese people eat fish, sushi in particular, for every meal: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. This may be due to the popular image of sushi — thin, bite-sized slices of fresh fish on top of rice. Although sushi is probably the most famous Japanese dish around the world, there is much more to eat in Japan than raw fish. Not only can you find restaurants serving dishes from all over the world, but the Japanese diet includes more than just seafood.

### *Typical Japanese meal*

First, let us consider what makes up the typical Japanese home-cooked meal. A typical meal would probably have a main dish of baked fish. In addition to the fish, a couple of side dishes of vegetables, some tofu and miso soup, and white rice complete the meal, usually accompanied by hot tea.

Sticky white rice accompanies almost every meal, although occasionally something else is added to the rice, such as red beans, green peas, or bamboo shoots. The side dishes of vegetables often include steamed spinach, boiled pumpkin, some kind of radish, green beans, okra, eggplant, or potatoes. Tofu, made from soybeans, is a popular side dish that accompanies many meals. Miso soup is a salty, brown

soup with a broth that falls somewhere between clear and opaque, depending on how often it is stirred. Seaweed often finds its way into the meal, either included in the miso soup, served in combination with one of the vegetables, or even served separately in dried, rectangular pieces, to be eaten with the rice. Finally, the main dish of baked fish can include many different types of fish. Because Japan is surrounded by oceans, there are plenty of sea fish to choose from. Salmon, sardines, cod, mackerel, and tuna are all commonly served, as well as freshwater fish on occasion. Fish are often baked and served whole, although bigger fish may be filleted.

This is the typical Japanese home-cooked meal, full of vitamins and minerals. Although the sodium level is rather high, the meal is altogether quite healthy. The low fat content of the typical meal may also explain why most Japanese people remain thinner than their American counterparts.

### *Other dishes & meals*

Should you want to look for alternatives to the meal listed above,

there are many other dishes to choose from in Japan. Noodles are sometimes eaten instead of rice, with *udon* noodles and *soba* noodles being two of the most popular types. *Udon* noodles are white in color and thicker than the average spaghetti noodles. *Soba* noodles, grayish in color, are made from buckwheat, and are about the same size as spaghetti noodles. Both of these types of noodles are used in many different tasty dishes.

Ramen noodles are another popular food in Japan. For most

Americans, ramen noodles mean the instant type found in square packages at the grocery store, a basketful for a dollar. Ramen noodles in Japan, although available in the instant grocery store version, are best eaten at a ramen specialty shop. Ramen restaurants are especially popular in Japan, and are famous for creating new recipes at each particular store.

Gyoza, originally a Chinese dish of dumplings filled with mincemeat and garlic, is popular at many of the same restaurants that serve ramen. Fried rice is served at almost every ramen shop too, and is not at all scary or unusual.

Another fried food choice is *katsu*,

*A seemingly popular misconception is that Japanese people eat fish, sushi in particular, for every meal: breakfast, lunch, and dinner.*





which is pretty similar to a chicken fried steak though it is often made with pork. *Katsu* might be served alone, on top of rice, or even covered with a spicy curry sauce, which, although Indian in origin, is a popular dish in Japan. Fried chicken is popular too, as are *korokke*, which are fried potato croquettes.

Tempura, seafood or vegetables deep fried in a light tempura batter, is a tasty alternative to the baked fish option. Another alternative is *shabu shabu* with thin slices of beef boiled and dipped in a tangy sesame sauce.

Sukiyaki also uses thin slices of beef, but with tofu and vegetables all cooked together, with an egg added at the end of cooking. *Nikujaga*, which, by the way, is an easy word to remember if you associate it with Mick Jagger, is a meat and potato dish that is not unusual at all to the American palette.

*Yakitori*, grilled chicken on skewers, is popular, especially at cookouts, as is *yakisoba*, or grilled *soba* noodles.

Finally, a delicious dish called *okonomiyaki* is somewhat like a dinner pancake made with cabbage and a choice of many ingredients — from seafood to ham and cheese, to just about anything else you can imagine — grilled and covered with *okonomiyaki* sauce and mayonnaise.

Fried Chicken, and Subway restaurants all well represented. Other burger chains include the Japanese chain, Mos Burger, and the Korean chain, Lotteria. For pizza lovers, most Italian restaurants have pizza on the menu, and the bigger cities in Japan will have U.S. companies that deliver, such as Pizza Hut or Dominoes. Another option is one of the many Japanese pizza restaurants, such as Pizza La or Chicago Pizza, that offer somewhat different topping choices, including squid, pineapple, corn, and mayonnaise. Some other popular restaurant chains in Japan include Yoshinoya and Matsuya, which serve beef bowls — thin strips of grilled beef and onions on top of a bowl of

somewhat like a macaroni and cheese with rice casserole, or hamburger steaks.

For meat lovers, Japan can be an expensive place. Although beef is not uncommon, the portions are smaller despite a higher price than can be found in the United States. Tender yet fatty beef is more popular in Japan than the low-fat variety. Although steaks are available at family restaurants, they are actually much closer to meatloaf than a steak. Because these restaurants offer many different types of foods, many families or groups can go together and still find something on the menu that everyone likes. National chains include Royal Host, Cocos, Volks, Friendly's, Denny's, and Big Boy.



Dale Benfield, Jr

## Convenience Stores

One cannot complete a story about eating in Japan without some mention of convenience stores. From any spot in any modern Japanese city, you are probably no more than a few blocks from a convenience store. So convenient are these stores, that most are open 24 hours, with many not only serving boxed lunches, but also sandwiches, drinks, snacks, and dessert items. The clerks will gladly heat up your meal with the microwave, or serve you some piping hot oden stew that is available in the wintertime.

Because most stores receive new shipments many times every day, you have a good chance of getting food that is still fresh. The country's biggest chain of stores is 7-11, with Circle K, Lawson, and Family Mart all close behind.

## Options For Everyone

With so many options to choose from, the weary tourist has plenty of delicious meals waiting for them when they come to Japan, with or without fish.

## Restaurants

Because most tourists to Japan will not eat their meals at someone's home, it is important to discuss the many options available when eating out in Japan. A particularly helpful aspect of many restaurants in Japan is the colorful display menu in front of the store. Before entering, customers and window shoppers alike can look at the display to see not only the menu and prices, but also actual life-size, realistic plastic food. Many global fast-food franchises dot the skyline, with McDonald's, Kentucky

white rice. Both of these restaurants are especially cheap, offering a full meal for less than 500 yen (about \$5 U.S.).

Another popular type of restaurant in Japan is the so called, "family restaurant." These restaurants offer many different types of food, from Chinese (fried rice and ramen noodles) to Italian (spaghetti and lasagna), and Japanese (set meals) to American (hot dogs and sandwiches). Popular dishes available at these restaurants include various *doria* dishes, which is



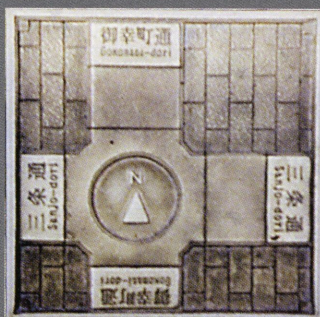
# Grid Streets of Kyoto

By Eiko Shiota



Kyoto has a wonderful landscape from the air. One can see many streets arranged orderly from the north to the south and the east to the west like grid lines. When

the capital was moved to Kyoto in 794, the streets were arranged in the present pattern. Since then, this street arrangement has remained almost unchanged. Because of their regularity, it is not difficult to find a destination in Kyoto. However, people often get confused due to the overwhelming number of street names in Kyoto. How can this problem be solved? Are there good ways to memorize the names? The nursery rhymes that were sung among children in Kyoto are the key. This article takes a short trip through the streets of Kyoto with songs.



*Sign on the road at Sanjo-Goko*

"Tera-Goko" disappeared completely once, and was rewritten during the Showa period (1926-1989). Both songs are handed down from parents to children and sung while bouncing a ball. The songs have several variants, but there are no songs that include all of the street names.

In the Heian period (794-1192), Kyoto was surrounded in all directions by four wide streets or "Ooji." The north street was called "Kitaooji," or the north major road; the south street, "Minamiooji," or

The song "Tera-Goko" begins with the east street, "Teramachi," and ends with the west, "Nishijin." Both of the streets are inside of the "Higashiooji" and "Nishiooji." However, the street songs include almost all of the important streets in the center area of Kyoto.

## East & west

The original music of "Tera-Goko" was unknown because of its extinction many years ago. Now, only words of the song and rewritten music are retained. The song below includes 31 street names in Kyoto. Usually, words in street songs are made of one or two initials of street names. In the first line, for example, Tera refer to "Teramachi," Goko to "Gokomachi," Fuya to "Fuyamachi," Tomi to "Tominokouji," Yanagi to "Yanaginobanba," Sakai to "Sakaimachi," and Taka to "Takakura." The song lists the street names from east to west.

### "Tera-Goko"

Tera Goko Fuya Tomi Yanagi  
Saka Taka  
Ai no Higashi ni Kuruma  
Karasuma  
Ryo Muro Ko Shin Kama Nishi  
O Gawa  
Abura Same Hori Yoshiya Ino  
Kuro Oomiya Matsu Higurashi  
ni Tiekoin  
Jyofuku Senbon hate wa  
Nishijin  
North and south

"Maru-Take-Ebesu," introduced above, is a rather famous song, so some people who live outside of Kyoto city also sing this song. Twenty-five street names are



*A scene at Nishiki Street or Kyoto's kitchen.*

## The street songs of Kyoto

Before starting the trip, one needs a brief explanation of Kyoto's street songs. There are roughly two kinds of songs dealing with the street names in Kyoto. One is called "Maru-Take-Ebesu." Its words start from the north and end on the south side of Kyoto. The other is "Tera-Goko," which starts from the east and ends on the west side. "Maru-Take-Ebesu" is more popular than the latter because

the south major road; the east side, "Higashiooji," or the east major road; and the west street, "Nishiooji," or the west major road. Except for Minamiooji that became "Kujyo" later, all still exist even today. The north street, which appears in "Maru-Take-Ebesu," is "Marutamachi." That is the road in front of the Imperial Palace. The south street is "Jujo," the next street of "Kujyo."





included in this song. The words of this song are arranged in order from north to south. In the first line, Maru refers to "Marutamachi," Take to "Takeyamachi," Ebesu to "Ebisugawa," Ni to "Nijo," Oshi to "Oshikoji," and Oike to "Oike."

### *"Maru-Take-Ebesu"*

*Maru Take Ebesu Ni Oshi Oike  
Ane San Rotsukaku Tako  
Nishiki  
Shi Aya Butsu Taka Matsu Man  
Gojyo  
Setta chara chara Uo no Tana  
Rokujiyo San Tetsu torisugi  
Nanaiyo koreba Hachi Kujo  
Jyujyo Toji de todome sas*

The two songs can be said to be a work of wisdom of the people living in Kyoto. One can apply them to addresses in Kyoto by combining them with direction names now. However, there are special rules to follow that must be understood to know more about the grid pattern of Kyoto's streets.

## Vertical & horizontal directions

People in Kyoto use unique names for directions. It is largely known that the Imperial Palace is situated at the center of Kyoto, and an emperor in the Palace sits straight to the south. Because of this fact, areas of Kyoto can be divided into four parts: "Kami" (the north), "Shimo" (the

south), "Ukyo" (the right side of Kyoto from an emperor, the west), and "Sakyo" (the east). When one goes toward the Palace, now generally northward, people say "Agaru" (to go up) and southward, "Sagaru" (to go down), because going toward the north means going up to an emperor and the south means coming down from an emperor. The expression of direction names on the west and east are simpler than those of the north and south. One can say simply, "Nishi iru" (to go westward) or "Higashi iru" (to go eastward). People living in Kyoto use the combination of street names and these directions to express an address.



*Toh Temple, part of the song "Maru-Take-Ebesu"*

## Names of intersections

In Kyoto, almost all roads run straight and cross at right angles. Thus, names of intersections are usually composed of two street names. For example, the crossing where Sijo Street meets Kawaramachi Street, called "Sijyo-Kawaramachi;" Karasuma Street meets Oike Street called, "Karasuma-Oike;" and so on.

There is no rule for the order of the names, though people tend to say first the name of major streets or the street that is near to the listener, physically and psychologically. There are, however, exceptions like "Hyakumanben," where Imadegawa Street crosses Higashiooji Street.

## How to express locations

People in Kyoto can understand addresses without using street numbers. The address used by local people in Kyoto city is made up by combining intersections and directions. The rudiments are not so

complicated. These addresses are referred to according to which direction one moves from the nearest intersections. For example, the address of Kyoto Tower, situated in front of the Kyoto Station, is "Karasuma-Hichijyo Sagaru," which means the Tower is on the south of Karasuma-Hitijyo intersection. If

one wants to go to a government office building of Kyoto prefecture, "Shimotachiuri-tori Shinmati Nishi iru," start from Shimotachiuri-Shinmachi intersection, go toward the west, and one can find the office. Of course, there are proper addresses in addition to the addresses above, but it is sufficient to express intersections and directions to a guide in Kyoto.

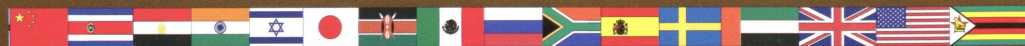
Though there are too many street names in Kyoto to count, people living in Kyoto have experienced the convenience for a long time. One of the reasons is because the roads are orderly and areas are divided like many squares. If a person loses their way, they can remember to turn corners in the same direction three times, and can return to the same point as before. It is not easy to memorize the names of the streets in Kyoto, but it helps one to escape from a maze arranged more than 1,200 years ago.

*Photography by KahoringLiving*



*Takase River as viewed from Sanjyo Street*





# Bon Festival

& five Chinese characters lit on the hillside

By Nobumichi Kawada



Bon, like New Year's Day, is a traditional annual event in Japan. The Bon Festival is held for the repose of the souls of our ancestors. New Year's Day is one of the Shinto

celebrations, welcoming the Japanese gods, while Bon is one of the Buddhist rites. But, in fact, while some Buddhist sects do nothing special for Bon, others practice everything that has been handed down from ancient times. That is to say, all Japanese do not do all the things mentioned in this article. There is even an opinion that Bon events have nothing to do with Buddhism.

In the lunar calendar, Bon was celebrated from July 13-16, but now it is generally commemorated from Aug. 13-16. The term Bon is celebrated on different dates by the various sects of Buddhism in Japan. Bon is so deeply rooted in daily life, that Japanese associate it with summer vacation. Most Japanese companies are closed several days before and after Bon. People and families living in the city return to their hometowns to take part in Bon festivities. But in recent years, fewer observe the tradition of Bon. Non-Buddhists tend to think of it as summer vacation, and think they can travel and go abroad for sightseeing or go shopping during Bon. But many people return to

their hometown to welcome the returning souls.

*The word Bon comes from the Sanskrit, ulanbana, meaning "the pain of being hanged headlong."*

The word Bon comes from the Sanskrit, *ulanbana*, meaning "the pain of being hanged headlong."

A story states that when one of the disciples of Buddha, the priest Mokuren, grieved because his mother fell into hell where she was hung upside down, Buddha told the priest to hold a memorial service. The priest carried out what Buddha told him, and saved his mother. Although this is a story, the Bon Festival is based on this folklore. The

Sanskrit was translated into Chinese, and in China, this was mixed with the Chinese custom of welcoming the souls of the ancestors and of consoling them before it was introduced into Japan. The Japanese abstracted the syllables (-bana) from *ulanbana*, translated into Chinese characters in China, and translated it into the Japanese word, *bon*.

At Bon, people make *bon dana*. These have many names, for example *shouro dana*, *tama dana*, and so on. Moreover, as there are many types of *bon dana*, there is no typical one. But *bon dana* often have a shape like a small table. Depending on the manner of a particular sect, people spread a straw mat on a table and place on it an *ihai* (the plaque on which the lifetime and posthumous name of their ancestors are written), a candlestick, a bell called a *rin*, a small vessel filled with water, and other offerings.

*Bon dana* may include the use of vegetables modeled like animals. These are also a kind of offering. This





offering symbolizes the wish for the souls of the dead or their ancestors to return to their home, riding the vegetable animals.

A *mukaebi*, or *bon chochin* (a Japanese paper lantern for Bon), is lit at the outside entrance of a house, and *bon chochin* are placed on both sides of the *bon dana*. These lights help the souls of ancestors to return without losing their way.

During the Bon period, people live with the souls of their ancestors and console them. And in the evening, people hold a party or

Nagasaki, or Daimonji Okuribi in Kyoto. In Shourou Nagashi, people set some Shouros (small boats made of wood or glass upon which one puts some offering or lit candles on the boat) afloat on a river.

A community in Kyoto burns Daimonji Okuribi where the bonfire is burned in different patterns on the five hills surrounding Kyoto. The patterns are the characters *dai*, *hidari dai*, *myou-hou*, *torii*, and *funagata*. *Dai* is the main character in Gozan no Okuribi. This character is one of the Chinese characters (*kanji*),

priest of the Nichiren sect of Buddhism added *myo* to the Okuribi Festival in the Kamakura Period, and *ho* was added in the early modern age.

The fire of Funagata is lit at the Saiho temple at the base of the mountain. This fire can be seen on Nichigamo Myokenzan. The story about the Funagata is that when Jikaku Taishi, the founder of the Saiho temple, went back to Japan from China in 847, the weather was rough. As soon as he threw a plate with the name of Buddha into the sea, the weather became calm. Funagata is based on this legend. In the case of the Saiho temple, after the *okuribi* burns out, the Bon dance begins.

The *torii* fire is lit on Mandarayama in Saga-Toriimoto. A *torii*, one of the Gozan no Okuribi, is not a Chinese character like the Funagata. They say the *torii* was lit in commemoration of Kukai's finishing a thousand images of Buddha out of stones. A *torii* is a shrine archway that is generally erected at shrines in Japan. It is strange that this mark does not fit for *okuribi* as one of the Buddhist events.

On Okitayama one sees the small-sized *dai*. This character is called *hidari-dai* (*hidari* in Japanese means left). The reason the left *dai* is counted as one of the *okuribi* is because the light of *dai* on Nyoigadake is reflected on the pond in Muromachi Goshō (Muromachi Goshō is the place the Emperor once lived).

Those five Chinese characters are lit at 8 p.m., one after another. When all the *okuribi* appear in the nocturnal sky in Kyoto, the view is mystic and excellent.

The colored lights of the fireworks or the skyrockets are brilliant and showy, while the light of *okuribi* is elegant, tasteful, and quiet. The souls of the ancestors must go to heaven while the fires die out. And, in this way, the Bon Festival finishes with calmness.



gathering in an open space, and dance the Bon dance to entertain the souls. Each community often holds Bon dance parties.

The Awa dance in Tokushima Prefecture may be the most famous Bon dance in Japan.

After people spend some days with the souls of their ancestors, the souls must leave this world and go back to the world of the after life. People see off the souls, making a bonfire called an *okuribi* ("sending off fire"). The bonfire burns after dark, and some people pray that the souls make a safe journey back to heaven.

Originally, each house burned an *okuribi* for the ancestors going back to the next world. But there are different types of *okuribi* in Japan. For example, Shouro Nagasi in

shaped and burned on the hillside at Nyoigadake. Some people say the *dai* of *okuribi* began to be lit from the Heian Period (794-1192) when Kyoto was still the capital city of Japan. When the big fire broke out at the Jodo temple, Amida Buddha (the principal image of Buddha of the Jodo temple) jumped into the sky and gave off light. Kukai (Kobo-taishi), the high priest of the Zen sect of Buddhism, shaped the light to represent the character *dai* on the hillside.

The other people say that Ashikaga Yoshimasa began to make a fire to console his sons' souls after he lost his sons in battle.

Myou-Hou is lit on the hillside of the Nishiyama and Higashiyama, together making one word, meaning "supreme law of Buddha." A high





# 1867

## KYOTO



### By Kiyonori Okabe

The year 1867 saw Japan's greatest historic turnabout in Kyoto. Two major events took place, the Taisei-hokan Restoration on Oct. 14, and the Osei-fukko Restoration on Dec. 9. Before knowing what this means, we need to survey the situation at that time.

For more than 200 years, Japan had closed the country, but the visit of the "black ships" in 1853 startled the people from their peaceful dream. Though they were not the first visitors from the Western powers during the Edo Period, their policy was completely different from that of other visitors. They pressed the *shogunate* to open the country by gunboat diplomacy. Commodore Perry, of those ships, presented the *shogunate* with credentials from President Fillmore and two white flags with an accompanying letter that noted how to use them. At first, Abe Masahiro, the head of the Senior Council (*roju*), had taken a hard-line attitude toward Perry, but as soon as he understood what those flags meant, Masahiro finally decided to accept the credentials. As a result, the *shogunate* was having its isolationism abandoned.

At the same time, this visit caused the people to seriously consider coastal defense, and these circumstances produced an anti-foreign movement. Those who supported this movement thought they needed a strong government that could face the Western powers, so they determined to overthrow the *shogunate* whose influence began to seem too weak to face those powers.

As a natural response, the *shogunate*, offended by this situation,

undertook to repress the opposition. The "Ansei Purge," which the Regent (Taisho) Ii Naosuke executed, was the great repression of the anti-foreign movement. But this purge provoked the further hostility of the opponents against the *shogunate*, and this



Naosuke

produced their alignments with one another, which led to the decline of the *shogunate's* influence.

Since the last shogun Tokugawa

Yoshinobu began to think that it would be nearly impossible that the Tokugawa's single government got over difficulties at a chaotic time like this, he restored the reins of government to the Emperor by a



Yoshinobu

memorial to Goto Shojiro, the head of the Tosa bureaucracy, addressed to him. This was the Taisei-hokan Restoration.

It looked as though Yoshinobu returned the long-held reins of government all too soon, but he did it because he expected that the Imperial Court should entrust the reins of government to him again after having found them unmanageable. And about 10 days later, it turned out as he had figured.

It has been strongly said that he formed the new conception of a system of government, that is to say, a republican system of government. It should consist of the Upper House represented by *daimyo*, the Lower House represented by *hanshi*, "the retainers of daimyo," and Yoshinobu, as the tycoon, would administer the government. The Emperor would still have no voice in political affairs in this system.

On the other hand, the Osei-fukko Restoration was followed by the government of a state under the direct administration of the Emperor. While things went just as Yoshinobu



Perry



Masahiro





wished, advocates of the anti-Tokugawa movement watched for an opportunity to turn the tables with Iwakura Tomomi, a Kyoto noble, as leader.

On the eve of the coup d'État, a small meeting was held at his residence. Representatives of Satsuma, Tosa, Hiroshima, Echizen, and Owari heard the final plans, and agreed to provide the troops needed for the military phase. After preparations were complete, Iwakura went to the palace in the pre-dawn hours of Dec. 9 to secure the young Emperor's approval. Simultaneously, troops of the *han*, "the clan," represented in the meeting, moved in to seize the gates of the Imperial palace. Then, after a few carefully selected nobles, daimyo, and councillors had been admitted, the young Emperor appeared before them to read a proclamation that the old order had been restored. The Tokugawa regime was officially at an end.



Tomomi

Yamanouchi Yodo, the former lord of Tosa, was dismayed by the course of events. He feared that a general war might be ignited, and he felt an injustice was being done to Yoshinobu. In the conferences that followed, Yodo protested vigorously against the severity of the plans for Yoshinobu, and for a time he won Echizen and Owari to his side.



Yodo



Takamori

During a break, Yodo was grumbling, yet, when Saigō Takamori, one of the Satsuma leaders, came up to him and bowed, at that very moment, he saw a dagger in Takamori's bosom, grasped with his

hand. Yodo shook with fear and utter despair. The conference resumed and no one protested against the plans for Yoshinobu and others anymore.

Then a new government, under the leadership of an Imperial prince and staffed by members of the groups represented in Iwakura's house that night, and supported by the armed might of Satsuma, Choshu, and Tosa, began to take shape.

I have written about two major historic events in 1867, but this date reminds me of one man particularly more than these and other events. His name was Sakamoto Ryoma, a country samurai (*goshi*) of Tosa. He has been known to have achieved two enterprises: Satsuma-Choshu alliance and the Taisei-hokan Restoration. In fact, the latter might not have taken place without him, for almost the entire restoration program was contained within his Eight-Point Program for a new government that he showed Goto Shojiro onboard a ship bound for Kyoto on June of that year.



Ryoma

Four months later, Ryoma's program was put into practice, though he neither witnessed the other restoration nor took part in the dramatic reforms of the early Meiji Period. He was assassinated at the center of Kyoto on Nov. 15, a month after the Taisei-hokan and a month before the Osei-fukko Restoration. And ironically, it was his birthday.

Ryoma was an influential person, so his death was a serious loss to the new government. Who murdered him? This remains a mystery.

## Bibliography

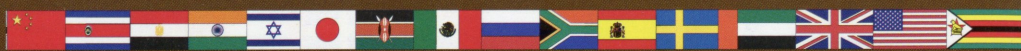
Jansen, Marius B. *Sakamoto Ryoma and the Meiji Restoration*. Stanford U.P.: 1971.

## Eight-Point Program

1. Political power of the entire country should be returned to the Imperial Court, and all decrees should come from the Court.
2. Two legislative bodies, an Upper and a Lower house, should be established, and all government measures should be decided on the basis of general opinion.
3. Men of ability among the lords, nobles, and people at large should be employed as councillors, and traditional offices of the past which have lost their purpose should be abolished.
4. Foreign affairs should be carried on according to appropriate regulations worked out on the basis of general opinion.
5. The legislation and regulations of earlier times should be set aside and a new and adequate code should be selected.
6. The navy should be enlarged.
7. An Imperial Guard should be set up to defend the capital.
8. The value of goods and silver should be brought into line with that of foreign lands.

In view of the state of the nation in these days, it is vitally important to announce these eight points to the countries of the world. If these policies are carried out, the fortunes of the Imperial Country will change for the better, national strength will increase, and it will not be difficult to achieve equality with other countries. It is our prayer that we may base ourselves on the path of enlightenment and virtue and that the land may be renewed with great resolution.

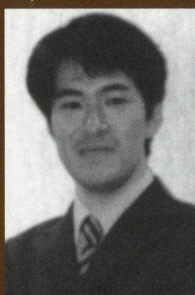




# DIALECT

## KYOTO

By Norimasa Nomura



Do you know some Kyoto dialect? It is said that Kyoto dialect is graceful because it is spoken at a slow tempo. Kyoto people generally say that it is graceful to use

*taberu* (to eat) instead of *kuu*, and they use *oishii* (delicious) instead of *umai*.

It is also thought that euphemism is one of the factors leading to the gracefulness of Kyoto dialect. For example, you can say (1) when you want to buy a stamp at the post office, (1) *Kitte*, *okureyashimahenyaroka* (Please give me a stamp).

Moreover, you would be able to say (2) when you want someone to keep your umbrella, (2) *Sunmahenkedo, kasa azukatte moraemahen dosu yaro ka* (Will you keep an umbrella for me?).

Kyoto dialect avoids direct expressions and tends to like euphemism. As in (3), when you add *-ya* to the end of sentence, it sounds soft, (3) *Mattete-ya* (Please wait for me).

With (4) *Mattete-okure-yasu* (Will you wait for me?) and (5) *Matte-okure-yasa-shimahen-yaro-ka*

(Would you wait for me?), (4) is more polite than (3). Phrase (5) is more euphemistic than (4).

I still would like to consider imperative a little. If you want someone to go somewhere, you can say (6) *Iki* (Go), or (7) *Iki-na-hare* or (8) *O-iki-yasu*.

In (7), *-hare* is the imperative form of *-haru* which conveys a soft and polite attitude toward the listener. Phrase (7) is more polite than (6). Moreover, (8) is more polite than (7). When you want someone who lingers to act quickly, you can say either (9), (10), (11), (12), or (13):

- (9) *Hayo-shi* (Do quickly)
- (10) *Hayo-o-shi*
- (11) *Hayo-sen-kai-na*
- (12) *Hayo-o-shi-yasu*
- (13) *Hayo-shihattara-yoroshi-osu-noni*

Phrases (9) and (10) are often used for a mate or colleague. Phrase (11) implicates the strong feeling of demanding or urging, and (12) and (13) are expressions which show respect for the listener and euphemism.

When you meet someone in Kyoto in the morning, you can say (14) as a greeting, (14) *Ohayô-san* (Good morning).

Phrases (15) *Ohayô-san-dosu*, and (16) *Ohayô-san-de-gozai-masu*, may

also be used.

While (15) is more polite than (14), (16) is more polite than (15). The use of Kyoto dialect nuance is caught by the paradigmatic relation of these words.

You may notice that in Kyoto dialect prefix *O-* and suffix *-san* express respect and are frequently used as in (17) *o-hi-san* (the sun), (18) *o-tsuki-san* (the moon), (19) *yaya-san* (baby), and (20) *onagoshi-san* (maid).

It is characteristic that this “*-san*” is extended to the food relational words in (21), (22), (23), and (24): (21) *o-mame-san* (beans), (22) *o-imo-san* (potato, sweet potato), (23) *o-tama-san* (egg), and (24) *ame-san* (candy).

Kyoto people pay respect to food and drink as well as man. Furthermore, when you have a visitor, you can say (25) or (26): (25) *O-koshi-yasu* (Welcome) or (26) *O-ide-yasu* (Welcome).

Not only adding *O-* but also adding *-yasu* communicates the feeling of looking up to a person. It is good to say (27) when you meet the person who achieves success or celebrates a person's birthday or a new year: (27) *Omedeto-san-dosu* (Congratulations, Happy Birthday, or Happy New Year).

As seen in the above example, use of the prefix *O-* or suffixes *-yasu*





and *-dosu* make the words Kyoto-like. In Kyoto dialect, honorific words develop. The suffix, *-osu*, is used as an auxiliary verb of high respect. If you feel hot, for example in the summer, you can say (28) as a greeting word: (28) *Atsu-osu-na* (How hot it is!).

In comparison with *-osu*, *-haru* shows a low degree of respect. Both *-osu* and *-haru* occur at the end of a sentence as in (29) *Ano hito êkoto yûta haru* (That person said a good thing) and (30) *Kono hon yomaharu ka* (Will you read this book?).

In (30), the last *-ka* functions as an interrogative particle in the Japanese language. The suffix *-haru* is also used toward animals or inanimate objects as in (31), which is usually uttered toward children by an adult: (31) *Wanwan ga kiya hatta* (A dog came). In (31), *-hatta* is a past variant of *-haru*.

The use of *-dosu* is a special property of the Kyoto dialect, with *-dosu* a variant of *-desu*, which is used in standard Japanese language.

For example, if you agree with a person, you can say like (32) *Sô dosu* (I think so).

Another example of a Kyoto phrase used if you make a mistake, you can say (33) or (34) as the expression of begging a person's pardon: (33) *Kannin-e* (I'm sorry) or (34) *Kannin-dusu-e* (I'm very sorry).

Like (33) or (34), adding *-e* to the end of the sentence makes a polite expression. Today, *-dosu* is used less by the young as compared to older women.

Next, negation is expressed by adding *-hen* or *-hin* like examples (35) and (36). The standard *Shira-nai* is changed into (35) *Shira-hen* (I don't know), while (36) *Deki-hin* is "I can't do it."

It is also noted that the use of interjection particle "na" as in (37), *Honmani-nâ* (It is true). For an affirmative response, "hê" is often used as in examples (38) or (39): (38) *Hê, sô dosu* (Yes, I think so) and (39) *Hê, okini* (Yes, thank you).

When people express gratitude to

you, you can say (40) in return: (40) *Nani-osshatokure-yasu* (You're welcome).

In Kyoto, *Ate* or *Wate* is often used as the first person pronoun in addition to *Watashi* among older women. *Uchi* is usually used among young women.

As for the second person pronoun, *anta* is often used, though *anta* is used less in Kyoto because it is too distant. Example (41), *anta-han* (you), tends to be used more than *anata-san*. In (41), *-han* is often used in place of *-san* as in standard Japanese. The suffix, *-han*, is an honorific title similar to "Mr." or "Mrs."

To sum this up, there are three features in Kyoto dialect: to speak in slow tone; to use polite expressions; and to express euphemistically.

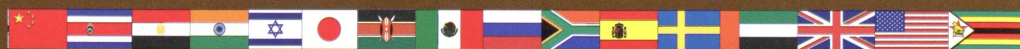
Kyoto dialect is the thoughtful words Kyoto people have built up and improved over a thousand years. In closing, I would like to say *ôkini* for the reader who reads this line instead of *arigato*.



*Shops in Kyoto Station*

KahoringLiving





## Why has *The Tale of Genji* been read for 1,000 years?



By Hiroko Okamoto

Murasaki Shikibu wrote the world's oldest novel, *The Tale of Genji*, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The main character of the story, Hikaru Genji, is a true hero with extraordinary talent and charm.

Murasaki Shikibu was a pseudonym used when she served one of the wives of the Emperor Shoshi. Shikibu was from a middleclass background, and her father was a scholar of Chinese literature. In her childhood, especially after her mother died, her father greatly influenced her.

In the Heian Period, girls were not taught to write Chinese characters, but Shikibu had great ability and a passion to learn it. Her diary, *Murasaki Shikibu Nikki* (1007), shows she had been very able as a

little girl, eclipsing her brothers. Shikibu understood the lessons quickly and competently. Her father always wished that she could have been a boy. Her interest and talent in literature during childhood encouraged her to write *The Tale of Genji*.

Though her full background is not clear, the year of her birth is usually given as 978, and it is said that she married at about age 22 to a much older man named Nobutaka Fujiwara. They had a daughter, and her husband died after only three years of marriage. It was then that Shikibu started writing her novel. Upon completion, her novel enjoyed much acclaim and she started to serve the Empress Shoshi. While Shikibu lived in the court among noble people, she did not blindly praise them, but sought the real human nature apart from any social status with an objective attitude. In her diary, she described her public life at court and wrote severe criticism of the people she knew.

Famously, she criticized Sei Shonagon, who was a superb essayist of the same period. Shikibu thought Sei Shonagon sought an opportunity to show off her knowledge in spite of her immaturity. Like her diary, her novel is an amazing work that sensitively describes human characters and nature.

*The Tale of Genji* is composed of 54 chapters, and can be divided into three contextual parts. In the first part, from the first chapter, *Kiritsubo*, to the 33<sup>rd</sup> chapter, *Fuji no Uraba*, Hikaru Genji's romance and his glories are described.

Though he was born as the son of

the Emperor Kiritsubo, he was not made a crown prince, but was assigned membership to the non-royal Gen clan because his mother had no strong backing at the court. After Genji's mother dies, his father marries a young woman named Fujitsubo who is very much like his ex-wife. Genji starts to adore his new mother figure, and that feeling gradually changes to love between a man and woman. However, one day, when he goes to the mountains in Kitayama (located in the northern part of Kyoto) to meet a holy man, he finds a little girl who resembles Fujitsubo. Later, he discovers the girl is Fujitsubo's niece, and decides to take her under his care and raise her.

Genji is only 18 years old at the time. The girl is called Murasaki, and from this character, the author of *The Tale* adopted her name. After Genji's father dies, Genji is exiled to a lonely windswept shore called Suma (now a city in Hyogo Prefecture)

*Murasaki Shikibu  
wrote the world's  
oldest novel, The Tale  
of Genji, in the 11<sup>th</sup>  
century.*

because of the power struggle with Kokiden. Yet, Genji is helped by the ex-governor of Harima at Suma, and returns to the capital. Genji cannot leave his step-mother, Fujitsubo, and she gives birth to Genji's child. The child's parentage is kept secret between Genji and Fujitsubo. The child succeeds his ostensible father, Kiritsubo, to the throne, and Genji is promoted to the court because of his outstanding cleverness. Thus, his prosperity reaches its height.

The second part starts at the 34<sup>th</sup> chapter, *Wakana: Jo*, and ends at the 41<sup>st</sup> chapter, *Maboroshi*. This part describes Genji's deep suffering. Genji marries Murasaki, and he





loves her more than anybody else, but at this time, he is forced into an arranged marriage with his niece, Onna San-no-miya.

The marriage system in the Heian Period is unique. Bigamy was common and marrying a niece was not unusual. Genji's brother, Emperor Suzaku, is about to become a priest and asks Genji to look after Onna-San-no-miya. She is still innocent and immature. Neither Genji or Onna San-no-miya wants the arranged marriage. The marriage between Genji and Onna-San-no-miya hurts Murasaki, and she experiences great anguish. While Genji is away, Onna-San-no-miya has an affair with Kashiwagi, a friend of Genji's son, Yugiri, and she becomes pregnant. She gives birth to a son, Kaoru, and becomes a nun. Kashiwagi dies young from guilt.

Genji experiences the same thing he has done in his youth, and finds for the first time that his father might know about Genji and Fujitsubo's infidelity. Genji is frightened because of the guilt, and thinks of his father's memory. Murasaki passes away from sickness, and Genji's death is alluded to at the end of the second part.

The last part of the narrative is from the 42<sup>nd</sup> chapter, *Niou-no-miya*, to the 54<sup>th</sup> chapter, *Yume no Ukihashi*. This part describes Kaoru's discontented love. The story shifts to the third generation some nine years after Genji's death.

Kaoru has a different personality from Genji. Kaoru tries to pursue only one relationship, and is longing to be a priest. On the other hand, his friend, Niou-no-miya, who is Genji's grandson, is more ambitious and purposeful. They both fall in love with Ukifune, the unrecognized daughter of Prince Hachi. She feels the pressure of being loved by two men, and jumps into a river in a desperate bid to escape her suffering. However, the bishop at Yokawa saves her. Kaoru tries to see her again, but she refuses. *The Tale* ends, leaving

the fate of the characters undiscovered.

It is hard to say with one word the exact theme of such a magnificent story, but the sentiment "*mono no aware*" is underlying throughout the novel. It is a difficult word to translate into other languages. "*Mono no aware*" is a feeling of gentle, sorrow-tinged appreciation of transitory beauty, or it may express pathetic feeling, or sadness, and the awareness of ephemeral experience. "*Mono no aware*" is the essential tone of the novel, and *The Tale* describes the love and fear of fate of many people.

There are many women who live their lives tragically in *The Tale of Genji*. For instance, Fujitsubo is the wife of the Emperor, but she has an affair with her stepson and they have a child. She tries to refuse Genji, but she never can because she loves him. Love brings them a mixture of profound happiness and torment, and they are hopelessly entwined to their fate.

The episode with Genji and Fujitsubo displays an interesting, Freudian theme — the Oedipus complex. The most fascinating woman for a man is his mother, and her death intensifies his image of her as the ideal. Genji always pursues relationships with women who remind him of his mother, and he can never be free from his incestuous desires.

*The Tale of Genji* has been read for more than 1,000 years. One of the reasons for its enduring appeal is perhaps the grandeur of the context and sensibility of the characters' mentality.

Yet, besides this, the novel achieves the simple effect of exciting the reader. In contemporary studies, only women seem to enjoy it as a novel, and men seem to study it in an academic fashion.

The female writers who translated *The Tale* into modern Japanese, such as Fumiko Enchi, Seiko Tanabe, and Jakuchō Setouchi, say they devoted

themselves to *The Tale* when they were school girls.

In the 25<sup>th</sup> chapter, *Hotaru*, there is a scene that may answer questions such as: "Why has *The Tale of Genji* been read for as long as 1,000 years?" And, "Why is the way of reading different between men and women?"

While Genji's friend's daughter, Tamakazura, is reading a novel, Genji comes into her room and says, "Women are always crazy about such a made-up story. You must be born to be deceived."

Tamakazura answered, "A person who is used to falsehoods must think that way. But for me, everything in a novel seems to be true."

Genji then begins to seriously talk about his idea of a story, "Stories are just amazing. They hand down the beauty of human lives to the next generation and they show us the whole truth even if they are fictitious. Chronicles describe only a part of our lives even if they write about history."

In other words, he is saying novels show the truth of our lives more than real history, and it is for this reason that people have read *The Tale of Genji* for such a long time. As for the question of male and female readership, the Japanese writer Osamu Hashimoto writes an interesting opinion: women tend to compare themselves to the female characters in *The Tale* and try to examine their own lives. On the other hand, men are busy performing in actual lives and not interested in how others live in fiction.

Hashimoto says he doesn't know himself why women read *The Tale of Genji* so enthusiastically. He understands it in his mind, but not in the spirit.

Why do women love *The Tale of Genji* so much? Because their lives and feelings are reflected in the story and they discover their own lives anew. For women, talking about *The Tale of Genji* equals talking about themselves.





# HIGASHIKUJO,

## a Korean town in Kyoto

By Shinya Himeda

### The situation & population of Higashikujo

Higashikujo is the name of an area situated southwest of Kyoto Station. It is well known that many Koreans live in this area. The population is about 17,000, and households number around 7,700. The Korean population in this area is about 3,000, or 16 percent. Most of the Koreans live in Minami Ward, Kyoto, where Higashikujo is located.



### The formation of Higashikujo

Higashikujo was a small village that expanded after the railroad opened in 1877, and later when Kyoto opened the Fushimi line in 1895. Consequently, the population and number of households increased. Around 1910, many laborers moved to the area to lay a line of the shinkansen, to open the Higashiyama tunnel, and for bridge building. From 1925 to the 1930s, the population of Higashikujo grew rapidly. At the same time, many Koreans immigrated because of

public enterprises, city projects, and the fact that the dyeing industry needed laborers. After 1945, lower-income people moved to Higashikujo because of the clearance enterprise and the improvement work around Kyoto Station. However, except for Higashikujo, there had been no region that accepted Korean people. They started to live in Higashi-kujo in barracks and houses that were remodeled pigsties.

### An old Korean lady in the barrack town

Six months ago, I toured a district of Higashikujo where an environmental problem was the talk of Kyoto. In this town, there were many old barracks along a river. The street was too narrow to drive through by car. In case of a fire, fire engines couldn't enter because of the narrow passages.

As I was looking at some ducks on the stream while standing on a bridge covered with rust, an older Korean woman talked to me. She said the number of ducks was decreasing each year. In the same way, the number of her friends and neighbors was getting less because some had died or moved out.

The number of unoccupied houses has decreased and the environment of the town has changed because of a huge condominium or river improvement project. Today, there are not many barracks. The ducks come to the bridge to get food from the woman who feeds them every day. But when she goes away and the barrack town disappears, these ducks will not come, which is sad.

### Higashikujo & discrimination

The discrimination against the Higashikujo area consists of two aspects: environmental and racial issues. Kyoto did not deal with the environmental problem in some districts of Higashikujo. But recently, many barracks were torn down, and a new town may appear.

Another aspect is the discrimination against Korean people in Japan. It can be assumed, however, that



there have been many factors leading to Japanese discrimination against Korean people in Japan. But no discrimination should be allowed. After I moved out of

*After 1945, lower-income people moved to Higashikujo because of the clearance enterprise and the improvement work around Kyoto Station. However, except for Higashikujo, there had been no region that accepted Korean people. They started to live in Higashikujo in barracks and houses that were remodeled pigsties.*

Higashikujo, I was asked by some middle-aged or older Japanese if the public peace in Higashikujo was OK or if I had had some trouble with a Korean. The answer was, "no problem." In fact, it was safe and I got along with the people in Higashikujo. I have lived in Kyoto for seven years and I think that the three years I lived in Higashikujo were the happiest time because I enjoyed the neighborhood.

### Living in Higashikujo

The Korean population in the town where I had lived is said to be comparatively less than the other towns in Higashikujo. But, I did come into contact with some Korean culture.

Once, I saw two older women who were speaking Korean. A signboard written in Korean had me

wondering what it said. In that town, there were some *kimchi* shops. *Kimchi* is traditional Korean pickled vegetables with red pepper. When I first went to a Korean restaurant, I didn't know how to order because the menu was written in Korean. The cook translated the menu from Korean to Japanese. I saw a Korean festival, called Madang, where Koreans performed their traditional dances with native Korean costumes. I was lucky to see such a festival in Japan. Koreans and Japanese both enjoyed the festival. However, it is not easy to



*Six months ago, I toured a district of Higashikujo where an environmental problem was the talk of Kyoto. In this town, there were many old barracks along a river. The street was too narrow to drive through by car. In case of a fire, fire engines couldn't enter because of the narrow passages.*

open the festival. It is difficult to find a site for the festival because some officials have strong prejudices against Koreans. One day, some Japanese distributed slanderous leaflets. There are obstacles, but many Koreans and Japanese cooperate to hold the festival.

### The future of Higashikujo

Many Koreans call Higashikujo home. From a historical point of view, it must be noted that the Japanese forced the Koreans to Higashikujo. Higashikujo still has some areas that need environmental improvements. The Japanese need to cope with each problem and foster more cultural exchange between the Japanese and Koreans. Higashikujo can be considered a Korean town. In fact, Korean culture is evident. If we can interpret the Korean culture as valuable as our culture, we can have a better relationship.





# The traditional beauty of the Japanese maiko

By Naoko Kanata



Kyoto is an old city with more than 1,200 years of history. The *maiko* are representative of traditional manners and customs in Kyoto. In Hanamachi,

where the *maiko* live, it is possible to experience the unique atmosphere that values the traditional properties and costumes of Japan. Some people go to a geisha house in Gion or Pontocho to meet the *maiko*.

In earlier times, a great number of writers or painters used the *maiko* as subject matter for their works, and recently, it is a fad for young women to dress up as *maiko*.

What attracts many people to the *maiko*? The *maiko* sustains the traditional culture and beauty rarely seen in modern Japan.

It is said that the origin of the *maiko* was during the middle of the Edo period. The *maiko* live in five Hanamachi districts, Gion-kobu, Gion-higashi, Ponto-cho, Miyagawacho, and Kamishichiken, which are entertainment districts. At first, the *maiko* served at *mizuchaya*, a house where hot water or tea was served. In response to guests' requests, *mizuchaya* began to serve food and alcoholic drinks, and it came to be called *chaya* (tea house). The *maiko* came to attend at *ozashiki*, which is a banquet room, and they entertained the guests by performing dances, singing, conversation, games, and companionship. The *maiko* are part of a service trade that requires high standards of artistic ability. Therefore, to be a *maiko* involves a rigorous course of study in the traditional performing arts.

The *maiko* are apprentices to the *geiko* (geisha) and are underage. The *maiko's* kimono is a unique style characterized by *obokoi*, meaning innocent or unsophisticated. They wear a kimono with long sleeves, called a *furisode*, tied by a sash that is six to seven meters long. Their kimono is tucked at the shoulder and the hem trails on the floor. This way of wearing a kimono is supposed to evoke youth and innocence.

The *maiko's* kimono and hair ornaments are the essence of traditional culture in Kyoto or Japan, and the patterns of the kimono and hair ornaments vary according to the season and the month in which they are worn. For example, January is *shochikubai*, which is pine, bamboo, and a Japanese plum, symbolizes the celebration of the New Year. April is symbolized by the cherry blossom, July is the Gion festival, October is the chrysanthemum, and November is turning leaves.

The *maiko's* hairstyle changes with their career. *Ofuku* is the hairstyle at the beginning of the *maiko* apprenticeship; *wareshinobu* is that of the two or three elder *maiko*; and *sakko* is that of the



Traditional costume of a Maiko

*maiko* who becomes a *geiko* after a few weeks. *Yakkoshimada* is the most elegant hairstyle. The *maiko's* neckband is red, and when the *maiko* become the *geiko*, the color of the neckband is changed into white through a ceremony called *erigae*.

The *maiko* wear a costume and perform dances. The form is elegant; therefore, it is impossible for the *maiko* to acquire the graceful manners in a short time and result from rigorous study.

In order to be a *maiko*, at first, they are introduced to Hanamachi and belong to *yakata* or *okiya*, which is like a theatrical agency, and live a life as a *shikomi*. Without the introduction and permission of one's parents, individuals cannot become a *maiko*. They work for *chaya* and learn the traditional manners of Hanamachi in Kyokotoba (a dialect of Kyoto), which are needed for attendance of *ozashiki*. In the daytime, they go to a special school



to learn dance, *shamisen* (a three stringed lute), *nagauta* music, Japanese flower arrangement, tea ceremony and calligraphy. The period of *shikomi* is about a year, and, depending on their mastery of dance, it takes about two years to be a *maiko*.

Dance is the most important skill for a *maiko*. When dancing masters approve their dance, they can attend *ozashiki*. *Misedashi* is the first day when the *maiko* attend *ozashiki*. By that day, the *maiko* decide on the *geiko* who will look after them. They exchange cups of *sake* with each other and begin a relation similar to sisters.

A *Maiko* is bound to the *geiko* by strong ties. For example, when a dancing master scolds a *maiko* and training is interrupted, the *geiko* and *maiko* go together to apologize. The *geiko*, as a guardian, is called the elder sister, and the mistress of *yakata* or *okiya* is called the mother.

In addition, they have a tradition that the *maiko's* name receives one Chinese character from her *geiko*. If the name of the *geiko* is Tama-haru, the name of the *maiko* might be Tama-natsu.

However, as times change, there are also some changes in the world of the *maiko*. Recently, customers who requested the attendance of *maiko* in *ozashiki* decreased, and the number of the people who want to be *maiko* decreased accordingly. It is said that there were 3,000 *maiko* and *geiko* in Hanamachi at the peak period. Now, there are 55 *maiko* in five Hanamachi districts. It is thought that there are several reasons for this decline.

The first is a change in the social system. Before World War II, some girls became *maiko* because of poverty. When a family couldn't support itself, a daughter would be given to a *chaya* for a sum of money called *maegari* (a lump sum). The girl became a *maiko* and paid the money back to the *chaya*. Today, this custom has disappeared. In addition, in the

past, women who were born in Hanamachi had to be a *maiko*, but these days, they are free to select their own jobs, and the number of women who choose other jobs is increasing.

Another reason for the decline in *maiko* is the changing economy or the form of reception in society. In former times, *dannasyu* — rich people like *daimyo* (feudal lords), politicians, public servants, landowners, and presidents of companies — gave luxurious feasts with *geiko* and *maiko*. The *maiko* costume is expensive, and they had to rely on a *danna* to become their patron and offer them the money to buy a costume. In this situation, some of the *maiko* became emotionally involved with their patrons and had a sexual relationship with them.

Favorite or dependable customers

*The maiko are apprentices to the geiko (geisha) and are underage. The maiko's kimono is a unique style characterized by obokoi, meaning innocent or unsophisticated.*

are called *goiiki*. After World War II, this kind of relationship fell out of popularity, and there were not enough patrons to support the *maiko*. Instead of traditional entertainment, company receptions would use Western-style entertainment or golfing outings.

The payment in Hanamachi is also unique. Hanamachi is mainly made up of female households, so it is unsafe to handle money. In addition, if they exchange cash with

costumers, customers feel the reality of buying companionship. Therefore, *chaya* have a system that the payment is on credit. After some days, *chaya* go to the customers to collect the payment. However, if the *chaya* does not know the customer, they may find themselves unable to collect. In order to avoid this situation, *chaya* made a system of *ichigensan okotowari*, which requires an introduction from a regular customer.

It is said that another reason for the decline in *maiko* is a change in the shape of women's bodies. Recently, women are increasing in height. If a woman is more than 160 centimeters tall in wooden clogs (*koppori*), the height reaches 170-180 centimeters. Some women might be taller than their customers. To be pretty and childlike are important elements of the *maiko*, so it is said that it is difficult for tall women to be *maiko*.

The *maiko* is representative of the culture of Japan as well as Kyoto. In order to hand the *maiko* tradition down, there are a variety of experiments in Kyoto. At first, in order to bring up a successor to the *maiko*, Kyoto Dento Gigei Shinko Zaidan was established mainly in Kyoto during May 1996. The foundation recruits *maiko* from tourists in Kyoto. It has a tour where participants can have lunch and enjoy singing or dancing by the *maiko*. After that, the invitation begins. The foundation bears the onus of introducing the applicants to Hanamachi.

The age limit to be a *maiko* is 20. According to the foundation, there is some motivation to become *maiko*. The costume is beautiful, girls learn to dance, and they choose the work of a *maiko* to make the best use of their career.

Moreover, the foundation tries to lure customers to Hanamachi. There is still a system of *ichigensan*

Continued on page 60



# Temples in Kyoto

By Hong Liu



I am a Chinese student studying in Japan. From the moment I came to Japan, I have lived in Kyoto. I like to tour scenic spots and historical sites in my spare time.

However, I like

Kyoto the best among all the cities of Japan because it is a beautiful, ancient capital full of glamour.

Kyoto was founded as Heian-kyo, the capital of Japan, in 794. It remained the Imperial capital for more than 1,000 years, and has prospered as the center of Japanese culture.

Being an ancient capital, Kyoto is full of historical buildings and gardens representing each era of history. Kyoto is home to about 20 percent of Japan's national treasures and some 15 percent of the nation's important cultural properties. This

makes it the best city in Japan to view historical buildings and treasures.

Kyoto has always played the role as a religious city — a pilgrimage destination — and greatly influenced the formation of religious culture in Japan. Seventeen temples and shrines are registered as World Cultural Heritage Sites. Not only do these sites include typical ensembles of Japanese shrines and temples in their natural environment, but they are extremely important to help understand the formation of Japanese Shintoism and Japanese Buddhism, the history of mutual interaction between the two

religions, and the place religion holds in this country.

It is no exaggeration to say Kyoto's culture developed against the backdrop of court, temple, and shrine cultures.

## Honganji Temple

Ryukoku University is a Buddhist university belonging to the Jodo Shinshu sect and is next to Nishi Honganji. Every day, I can see the roofs of Nishi Honganji when I go to the Omiya campus of Ryukoku University.

Honganji is the main temple of the Honganji School of the Jodo Shinshu sect and was founded by

*Kyoto was founded as Heian-kyo, the capital of Japan, in 794. It remained the Imperial capital for more than 1,000 years, and has prospered as the center of Japanese culture.*



Kinkakuji Temple

Hong Liu



Shinran (1173-1263). Nishi Honganji Temple is called one of the finest examples of Buddhist architecture in Kyoto.

Higashi Honganji Temple is the headquarters for the Otani School of Jodo Shinshu. It is the largest wooden building in the world, measuring 3,900 square meters (0.96 acres). From Nov. 21-28, a Buddhist service is held for Priest Shinran, founder of the sect. It is called "Hōnko." During that time, believers from all over the world gather to recite "Shoshinge," a Buddhist scripture.

Recently, believers came to participate in large groups. They sometimes came by chartered buses. It was an event to gather and talk based on their beliefs. Incidentally, the same event is held from Jan. 9-16 in Nishi Honganji Temple. These two temples are the fountainheads of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, one of the largest schools of Buddhism in the country.

Today, the Amida-do and Goei-do (halls at the heart of Honganji) are open, free of charge, to the public, for anyone who wishes to come and pray. I visited Honganji Temple when a commemorative service marking the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of the great priest Rennyo was held three years ago. I was surprised so many people came. I'm not a Buddhist, but when I go into the building of Honganji, I'm always thinking about what is Buddhism and why it attracts a large number of followers.

## Toji Temple

Toji is another temple near the university. You may have seen Toji's five-story pagoda on postcards and pictures about Kyoto. The five-story pagoda at Toji is 57 meters high, making it the highest existing wooden pagoda in Japan and perhaps the most widely recognized symbol of Kyoto.

I feel lucky to live near Toji, because on the way home from school, I could see Toji's five-story

pagoda every day for the last three years. I was interested in observing the change of Toji in all four seasons. The blossoming cherries in spring, the green and luxuriant foliage in summer, the red and yellow leaves in autumn, and the clear and white snow in winter, all present different and beautiful scenery around Toji Temple. However, it always remained solemn, no matter the season or weather. I especially preferred seeing Toji's five-story pagoda in the glow of the setting sun. The dark and quiet silhouette of the pagoda as it disappeared gradually in the dusk and noise from Kyoto Station nearby added mystery to Toji.

Toji headquarters the Toji Shingon Buddhist sect. It is sacred to Yakushi-nyorai, the Physician of Souls. Though its formal name is Kyōu Gokokuji, it is called Toji, East Temple, because it was originally built on the east side of Rashomon Gate. Later, it was given to the priest Kobo Taishi, also called Kukai, by Emperor Saga.

For more than 1,200 years, Toji has marked the southern gateway to the city of Kyoto. A vast quantity of Buddhist treasures is stored at the temple, including cultural relics brought from the Tang Dynasty of China by Kobo Daishi. It is said that Toji possesses more Buddhist statues than any other institution in Japan.

For antique lovers, a famous open-air market is held on the 21<sup>st</sup> of each month on the Toji Temple grounds. Some 1,300 stalls sell a wide range of goods, including antiques, plants, furniture, food, and general merchandise. It may be possible to feel the special atmosphere of festivals of old.

## Kinkakuji Temple & Ginkakuji Temple

These two temples' architecture and gardens display a dignified beauty and purity unmatched in Japan's history. They are the jewels of Kyoto's historical legacy.



*Toji Temple after a snow*

Hong Liu



Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358-1408) built Kinkakuji in the western part of Kyoto, and Ashikaga Yoshimasa (1435-1490) built Ginkakuji in the eastern part. They were set on opposite sides of the city with contrasting names (the Golden Pavilion and the Silver Pavilion).

Kinkakuji Temple has a pavilion said to house a bone of Buddha. It is a three-storied building, and gold leaf covers its exterior, giving the pavilion its name. In the Muromachi era, the third Ashikaga Shogun, Yoshimitsu, was so greatly pleased with the area, that he tried to build the Land of Happiness in this world and built these structures and the landscape garden. After Yoshimitsu's death, Kinkaku was made into a Zen temple in accordance with his wishes.

I have visited Kinkakuji three times, and each time I wondered at the structure Yoshimitsu had built. The Pavilion shines brightly. Its magnificence helps people to think of Yoshimitsu's aspirations and power. I think Kinkakuji is more fit as a Land of Happiness than a temple.

Ginkakuji Temple is on the opposite side of town near the Higashiyama Mountains. However, it is a wooden building and was never covered with silver leaf. Ashikaga Yoshimasa founded Ginkakuji about 50 years after Yoshimitsu died. The temple garden is an example of the *chisen-kaiyu* style, which features a central pond with many superb rocks, trees, and shrubs. The details of its stone works exhibit an exquisite delicacy of design.

## Kiyomizu-dera Temple

Many Japanese like to say: "Take the plunge from the Kiyomizu Stage." Maybe you don't know what that means and also can't imagine what would happen when jumping from Kiyomizu Stage.

Kiyomizu-dera is set on a steep hillside and is possibly the most beloved temple in the nation. The main hall has two wings, and in the

south, there is a steep cliff on the hall's broad, wooden veranda over a wooded canyon. It is really a stage both in name and in fact. When standing on the hall's veranda and looking down, the deep meaning of the saying is understood. It means to take a determined step.

Kiyomizu-dera is acknowledged, both abroad and in Japan, as one of the treasures of humankind. Over the 12 centuries since the beginning of the Heian Period, Kiyomizu-dera has been a sacred place for the worship of Kannon, represented in the

*Being an ancient capital, Kyoto is full of historical buildings and gardens representing each era of history. Kyoto is home to about 20 percent of Japan's national treasures*

material world by the majesty of the temple buildings and scenic surroundings. Kannon is a god of mercy who dives into this world to save any sentient being threatened by evil.

Sitting amid the picturesque scenery of east Kyoto, the Kiyomizu-dera Kannon has always been widely recognized for its miraculous powers by people of all social classes and ages. It has long been revered as one of Kyoto's seven finest Kannon images.

Another famous aspect is the Otowa Waterfall in Kiyomizu-dera. The falling water is pure and refreshing, and the temple's name comes from this spot, which means

clear water. Many visitors catch the falling water, while praying for all manner of benefits, including good health, long life, academic success, wisdom, and good fortune. Certainly, I believe in this custom, and I lined up to catch the falling water and prayed while drinking the water.

Today, tourists can enjoy the Kiyomizu-dera scenery and a wonderful view of Kyoto from the hall's veranda.

## Ryoanji Temple

Ryoanji belongs to the Myoshinji School of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism. The main hall is a simple building in typical Momoyama style.

The rock garden in front of the hall consists only of white sand and 15 rocks, laid out so that only 14 of them can be seen at any viewing point. If one moves to see the hidden rock, another one will disappear behind one of the larger stones. Its simple beauty is intended to inspire philosophical meditation.

This simple, yet remarkable, garden measures only 30 meters from south to north. The rectangular Zen garden is completely different from the gorgeous gardens of court nobles constructed in the Middle Ages. No trees can be seen. Only 15 rocks and white gravel are used in the garden. It is up to each visitor to find out for himself what this unique garden means. Some see a group of tigers in the stones; others see islands in the sea. The longer you gaze at it, the more varied the imagination becomes. This rock garden, surrounded by low earthen walls, may be thought of as the essence of Zen art.

On the grounds of Ryoanji, there is a large pond that represents Buddhist paradise. A small island in this pond can be reached by a foot bridge. On the island is a Shinto shrine. This shows the tolerance of the two major religions of Japan. We often find Buddhist and Shinto buildings shoulder-to-shoulder at religious sites.



# How to be ordained as a Buddhist Monk

By Masafumi Moriwaki

When you are to be ordained a monk of the Hongwanji-sect of Shin-Buddhism, Jodo-Shinshu, you must attend a 10-day training program before receiving the Buddhist ordination, *tokudo*. Persons are admitted to this program after passing an exam given by the Hongwanji-sect or while pursuing an education in a school related to the sect, like Ryukoku University.

I was ordained a monk through this program in March 2001. It was a hard but wonderful experience that was really memorable.

I went to the Nishiyama training center before ordination. This is a complex institution consisting of a Buddhist temple, a lecture hall, and accommodations located on the west side of Kyoto. Here my group stayed for 10 days, almost isolated from the secular world, and from morning until night, we crammed the necessary knowledge and practical skills needed to be a monk. We could not watch television, read newspapers, or use a telephone during the program.

We arose at 5:30 a.m. and immediately started cleaning up our rooms. Then, dressed in the Buddhist monk vestments, we gathered at the temple, where, at 7, the practice of reciting a sutra and hymn begins. We had to remain seated straight, with our legs folded, directly on the floor for about an hour during the practice, where we recited precisely

and stayed fixed in this position. It was really painful for those who are not accustomed to sitting like this. The feet became numb during the practice.

There was no relaxing during meals because we were required to keep quiet while eating. Silence. Chatting was not allowed.

We attended lectures in the daytime and learned mainly the Buddhist thought and history, some manners of religious service, and the method of reciting a sutra. Attendees were supposed to have certain knowledge before coming to the program, so these lectures were regarded as a type of final reconfirmation. Concentration was essential because there was an examination after every lecture.

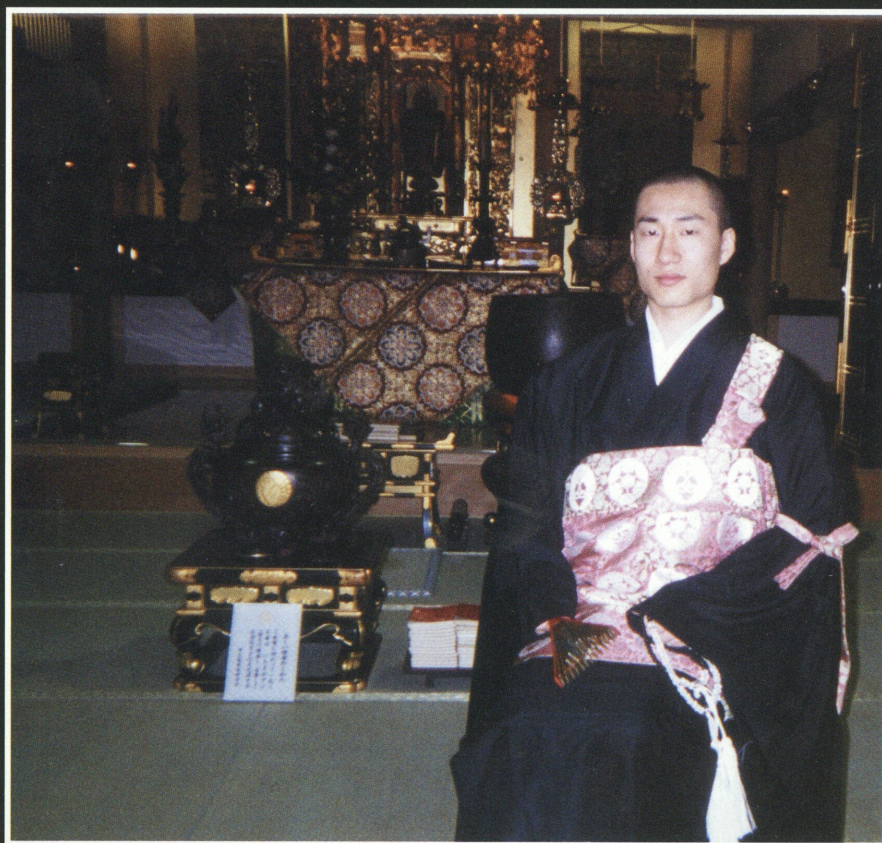
At sunset, there was a recitation practice again. It was carried out in the same manner as the morning practice, leading to dead legs twice in one day. After supper, we had to work and prepare for the next day's

program until bedtime. If a person was to take charge of a solo part in reciting a hymn the next morning, they practiced their part in order to recite it in precise scale and pitch. Persons who failed were told to try it all over again, while the others waited fretfully for success, their dead and painful legs folded on the floor. Preparation was indispensable.

This was the daily life in the training program. Upon completion of the program, a tonsure took place a day before the ordination. Heads were shaved completely as a traditional and symbolical act for becoming a monk. After the tonsure, one would feel purified.

And, finally, we could receive the *tokudo* ordination. This ceremony is conducted at Nishi-Hongwanji, the head temple of the Hongwanji-sect of Shin-Buddhism, located at the center of Kyoto. The main act of the ritual is the "laying on of hands" and

Continued on page 60



Masafumi Moriwaki in Buddhist vestment





# Shinran

## The Pure Land Saint during the period of the Japanese Renaissance in Buddhism

By Koji Hiramoto



There are two major streams in Japanese Buddhism; namely, Zen Buddhism and Pure Land Buddhism. These two traditions have played an important role in

molding Japanese culture and ideas. Zen Buddhism, actively introduced to the English-speaking countries by Japanese Zen master, Suzuki Daisetsu (1870-1966), better known as D.T. Suzuki in the United States, is already widely known in the Western countries. On the other hand, Pure Land Buddhism, in my view, is not well known in the United States and does not seem to have gone beyond being a Japanese local religion.

In order to introduce Pure Land Buddhism, I will concentrate on

Shinran and his ideas in this article. Shinran is said to have developed the Pure Land teaching to the highest degree, and his teaching is a good example toward understanding it.

### The Japanese Renaissance in Buddhism

The history of Mahayana Buddhism flowered during the Kamakura era (1193-1333). It was productive of the new types of Buddhist masters and thinkers. We can call this period the "Japanese Renaissance" in Buddhism.

The great Buddhist thinkers of this time were Hōnen, Shinran, Dogen, and Nichiren. Eisai and Ippen are also often included among them. They all had once studied and practiced Buddhism in the monastery of the Japanese Tendai Sect in Mt. Hiei, located near the border between Kyoto and Shiga Prefectures. They subsequently left the monastery because of their individual reasons and many of them actively practiced and preached in Kyoto.

Hōnen (1133-1212) and Shinran (1173-1262) had a master-disciple relationship and led an active religious life in Kyoto for a good while.

### The History of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism

In Pure Land Buddhism, it is generally understood that, through the Power of Amida Buddha, all

sentient beings can be born in the Pure Land and become enlightened. This notion was formed in India and was transmitted via China to Japan. Therefore, there were also a number of important figures in India and China in the history of Pure Land Buddhism. Among them, for instance, Shinran considered Nāgārjuna (ca. 200 C.E.) and Vasubandhu (ca. 300 C.E.) in India, and T'an-luan (476-542), Tao-ch'ao (562-645), and Shan-tao (613-81) in China to be the patriarchs in the True Pure Land Sect.

There were three major figures in Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, Genshin, Hōnen, and Shinran.

Genshin (942-1017) wrote *Ōjō-yōshū* [*The Essential Collection concerning Birth (in Amida's Pure Land)*] in 985, which became the theoretical base for the Japanese Pure Land teaching. It had a great influence on Pure Land thought not only in Japan but also in China. He founded the Eshin School of the Tendai Sect.

Hōnen (1133-1212), who is often called by his posthumous name, Genkū, emphasized the importance of reciting the name of the Buddha (*nembutsu*, that is to say "*namu-Amida-butsu* [Homage to Amida Buddha]"), and the birth in the Pure Land after death. He founded the Pure Land Sect and wrote *Senjaku-hongan-nembutsu-shū* [*Passages on the Nembutsu Selected in the Primal Vow*] in 1198. After his death, the Pure Land Sect was divided into four



schools: the Chinzei School founded by Benchō (1162-1238), the Seizan School by Shōkū (1177-1247), the Chōrakuji School by Ryūkan (1148-1227), and the Kuhonji School by Chōsai (1184-1266). The first two schools are still thriving in the present day.

Shinran (1173-1262) was a disciple of Hōnen and was said to have further developed his master's doctrine. In marked contrast with Hōnen's teaching, he emphasized *shinjin*, a kind of faith endowed by Amida Buddha, and naturalness as Genshō-shōjōju, "the Truly Settled in the present life."

Shinran regarded Genshin and his own direct master Hōnen as the sixth and seventh patriarchs in the True Pure Land Sect. Writing a hymn in his major work, *The True Teaching, Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way*, Shinran refers to these two patriarchs and well summarizes their ideas and teachings:

*Genshin*, having broadly  
elucidated the teachings of  
Sākyamuni's lifetime,  
Wholeheartedly took refuge in  
the land of peace and urges  
all to do so;  
Ascertaining that minds  
devoted to single practice  
are profound, to sundry  
practice, shallow,  
He sets forth truly the difference  
between the fulfilled land  
and the transformed land.  
The person burdened with  
extreme evil should simply  
say the Name:  
Although I too am within  
Amida's grasp,  
Passions obstruct my eyes and I  
cannot see him;  
Nevertheless, great compassion  
is untiring and illumines me  
always.  
Master Genkū [Hōnen], well-  
versed in the Buddha's  
teaching,  
Turned compassionately to  
foolish people, both good



A Buddhist image at Tisho Temple

and evil;  
Establishing in this remote land  
the teaching and realization  
that are the true essence of  
the Pure Land way,  
He transmits the selected  
Primal Vow to us of the  
defiled world:  
Return to this house of  
transmigration, of birth-and-  
death,  
Is decidedly caused by doubt.  
Swift entrance into the city of  
tranquility, the uncreated,  
Is necessarily brought about by  
*shinjin*.

## Shinran's Life Seeking after Truth in Kyoto

Shinran was born a son of Hino Arinori of the Fujiwara clan at Hino in the southeast of Kyoto in 1173 and was called Matsuwakamaro in his childhood. In 1181, he became ordained under the guidance of Jien of the Shoren-in temple in Kyoto and was named Hannen. He learned and practiced Tendai Buddhism for 20 years in the monastery in Mt. Hiei. However, he was neither able to become enlightened nor to feel secure about his future possibility to become enlightened.

When he was 28 years old, through the introduction of his friend Seikaku (1167-1235), one of the major disciples of Hōnen, Shinran went to see Hōnen for guidance and became his disciple. At that time, Hōnen was propagating the *nembutsu* teaching among all walks of people in Kyoto after he himself had left Mt. Hiei. Hōnen wrote his major work *Passages on the Nembutsu Selected in the Primal Vow* in 1198, in which he expounded his *nembutsu* teaching that, through *nembutsu*, reciting the name of Amida Buddha ("namu-Amida-butsu"), any human being can be born in the Pure Land and attain Enlightenment equal to the Buddha after his or her death.\*

Shinran changed his name to Shakkū and later to Zenshin.

Shoji Shimizu



He lived in Okazaki, Kyoto. Under Hōnen's guidance, he gave up efforts to attain spiritual emancipation through his own power and instead took refuge in Amida Buddha with all his heart.

## Shinran's Pure Land Teaching

Shinran did not intend to found a new sect; however, his followers regarded him as the founder of the True Pure Land Sect. He developed Hōnen's *nembutsu* teaching. The True Pure Land Sect became the largest one in Japan.

Shinran emphasized the truth of the *nembutsu*, reciting the name of the Buddha of the Other Power, that is, "*namu-Amida-butsu*." Amida was transliterated from the Sanskrit terms, *amitābha* and *amitāyus* which respectively stand for "infinite life" and "infinite light." Amida Buddha can be regarded as the primordial energy and power of the universe.

Shinran put an emphasis on *shinjin*, or a kind of faith endowed by Amida Buddha to a practitioner. Defining *shinjin*, Shinran writes in *The True Teaching and Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way*:

Reverently contemplating Amida's directing of virtue for our going forth, I find there is great *shinjin*. Great *shinjin* is the superlative means for attaining longevity and deathlessness. It is the wondrous way to awaken aspiration for the pure and rejection of the defiled. It is the straightforward mind directed to us through the selected Vow. It is *shinjin* that actualizes Amida's profound, vast benefiting of others. It is true mind that is diamond-like and indestructible. It is pure *shinjin* by which a person easily reaches the Pure Land where

no one goes. It is the mind that is single, realized by the person who is grasped and protected by compassionate light. It is great *shinjin*, rare and unsurpassed. It is the quick path difficult for people to accept. It is the true cause of attaining great nirvana. It is the white path by which all virtues are fulfilled instantly. It is the

ocean of *shinjin* that is itself suchness or true reality.

Shinran regarded the state of the self with *shinjin* as a kind of spiritual existence. He developed the concept of "the Truly Settled" based on *shinjin* through the Other Power of Amida Buddha. This concept in theory stands for the spiritual existence embraced and sustained



A Buddhist Temple Bell at Kyuomizu Temple

Shoji Shimizu





*An individual prays for Sizo, a small Buddhist image*

by inconceivable universal power. Shinran defines "the Truly Settled" through *shinjin* in *Notes on Once-calling and Many-calling*:

The being of the *nembutsu*: the person who has realized diamond-like *shinjin*. As such means immediately; also, by means of. Thus, "since one is immediately brought to dwell in the stage of the truly settled through the compassionate means of *shinjin*." Same means that the person of the *nembutsu* is the same as Maitreya in that he will attain the supreme nirvana... Master Shan-tao of Kuang-ming temple interprets this to be praise of the person of the *nembutsu* as the best among the best, the excellent person, the wonderfully excellent person, the truly rare person, the very finest person.

Shinran thoroughly observed human beings and understood that it was impossible for them to become enlightened by themselves. It is because they are essentially evil and defiled and cannot practice properly the Buddhist way by their self-power. He recognized human beings as incapable of being awakened

by themselves but as equal before Amida Buddha's great compassion and saving power.

Concerning the relationship between a good person and an evil person in his Pure Land thought, Shinran states as follows:

Even a good person can attain birth in the Pure Land, so it goes without saying that an evil person will.

He proclaims that he is an evil person who cannot become enlightened by his self-power and is the purpose of Amida Buddha's saving power.

## The Marginal or the Ultimate

Mahayana Buddhism's central principle is the concept of *pratītya-samutpāda* (dependent origination), which means that all phenomena are produced by causation. This principle and the concept of *śūnyata*, emptiness or relativity, are equivalent and Mahayana Buddhists understand that everything is without self-nature and is empty and relative.

Shinran's teaching is sometimes criticized for deviating from the mainstream of Mahayana Buddhism. It is often compared and contrasted

with Christianity. Objectifying the Buddha and the self as a sentient being that are originally relative and empty, Shinran formalized the dualistic relationship between the Buddha to save and the self to be saved.

This awakening of reality in Nishida's philosophy can be regarded as the ultimate stage of spiritual emancipation in Mahayana Buddhism.

Shinran's Pure Land teaching, on one hand, seems simple to understand and easy to practice; on the other hand, some Buddhist scholars consider that it is the ultimate stage of Mahayana Buddhism.

## Conclusion

During the Kamakura era, the common people in Japan were suffering from hunger and the terror of death because of a spell of warfare, abnormal weather, famine, and so forth. Living in this time of intense social upheaval, these Buddhist thinkers gained a deep insight into human nature and its relationship to the reality of the world. They tried to seek the true salvation for people in all walks of life. They earnestly searched for the way to be spiritually emancipated from the reality, which appeared to be defiled by evil passions and to be filled with sufferings.

The Japanese Buddhist masters and thinkers introduced in this article can be likened to providing spiritual home and shelter for the people of the country. Mahayana Buddhism is one of the greatest sources of Japanese culture and custom. The Pure Land teaching in particular, on the same level as Zen Buddhism, exerted a great influence on Japanese culture, art, ideas, and so forth. Students who are interested in these issues should, in my view, give careful and serious consideration to the Pure Land teachings, especially those of Hōnen and Shinran.



# Kabuki,

## a traditional theatrical art born in Kyoto

By Matsuda Mitsue



### The history of kabuki

Kabuki is a traditional theatrical art that originated among the common people in the Edo period (1603-1867). There are so many aspects to kabuki that can be appreciated, such as brilliantly colored costumes, colorful music, lavish staging, and brilliant stage devices. One of the characteristics of kabuki is that male actors play all the roles.

The *kanji* (Chinese characters used in writing) for *ka* means "music," *bu* means "dance," and *ki*, "skill or performance." They are the phonetic equivalents of the word *kabuki*, which is actually derived from the verb, *kabuku*, which means "tilted" or "out of balance." *Kabuku* came to mean "to dress in eccentric fashion and to be unconventional." During the time of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598), people started showing up on the streets dressed in eccentric fashions. These people were called *kabuki-mono*, or those who are eccentric and unconventional.

A female entertainer named Okuni, a shrine maiden from Izumo (today's Shimane Prefecture), incorporated this fashion into a dance form, and consequently is regarded as the founder of kabuki. In 1603, Okuni performed dances

within shrine compounds and the dry riverbeds of Shijo in Kyoto. Her dances, *yayako odori* (dancing with the gestures of infants) and *nenbutsu odori* (a prayer dance performed while chanting the sutra), became extremely popular. Her unique dances were named *kabuki odori*. In *kabuki odori*, Okuni dressed up



as a man — like one of the *kabuki-mono*. She would depict a male customer flirting with *chaya-onna*, prostitutes from brothels, acted out by male actors.

Okuni's *kabuki odori* became a big hit. The owners of brothels started to imitate it in order to attract customers, which gave rise to "prostitute kabuki." The Tokugawa Shogunate declared public morals were being destroyed, and decreed an official ban on the theatrical appearance of women in 1629. It was the beginning of the Meiji era

(1868-1912) before women were permitted to appear in theater again.

Beautiful young boys replaced women in similar dance-drama performances called *wakashu* (adolescent boys) kabuki. But these adolescent actors attracted both male and female admirers, and they also sold their bodies. *Wakashu* kabuki was banned in 1652.

Then, mature men replaced the adolescent boys in *yarou* kabuki, and this *yarou* kabuki became the forerunner of modern kabuki. The authorities gave these men permission to perform under two conditions. The first condition was that the entertainers would shave their forelocks, which was a symbol of *wakashu* kabuki. Secondly, these shows were to emphasize acting over singing and dancing, which meant they needed stronger story content. In effect, these regulations helped kabuki evolve into a dramatic art form.

Around the Genroku period (1688-1704), kabuki underwent a tremendous evolution in Edo (Tokyo) and Kamigata (Osaka, Kyoto). Edo was a booming city, while Kamigata was a merchants' town with a long history. People's tastes were different. In Edo, they preferred the more heroic *aragoto* (an exaggerated performance developed by Ichikawa Danjuro I in 1673). In Kamigata, they preferred the gentle and more realistic *wagoto* style. In contrast to *aragoto*, the *wagoto* style was more elegant and refined. It was Sakata Toujurou I (1647-1709) who first performed the *wagoto* style and





developed it. He played the male leads with realism and a touch of romanticism and humor. A typical play would depict some type of family strife; the protagonist might fall in love with a prostitute and be disowned by his parents. Eventually, the protagonist is forgiven by his family and given permission to marry his lover. In contrast to *aragoto*, the protagonist of *wagoto* is typically illustrated as mild, gentle, weak-willed, and naive.

During the Kyoho era (1716-36), *joururi* (narratives recited during *bunraku* or puppet plays) by *gidayu-bushi* (*joururi* narrative singing style performed by chanters and a *shamisen*, a three-stringed lute introduced from Okinawa) became extremely popular in Kamigata. *Joururi* writers did not have to give much consideration to actors. The writers could concentrate on the narrative structure, and developed more logical and complete stories in terms of drama than that of kabuki plays.

Kabuki adopted certain elements from the puppet plays, including its more intricate plots. Works that have come from *joururi* are called *maruhonn* kabuki. Many popular plays were adapted from *joururi*. In fact, the three most popular plays today, *Kanadehon Chushingura*, *Sugawaradennju Tenarai Kagami*, and *Yoshitsune Senbon Zakura*, are all from *joururi*.

Kabuki, which originated in Kyoto among the common people in the Edo period, has been popular for 400 years. It continued to evolve by adopting narratives and performing styles from other types of stage entertainment, while at the same time exerting an influence on them. Though kabuki is a traditional art, it keeps evolving and never loses its charm.

## Basic knowledge of kabuki story or narrative

The kabuki stories, or narratives, are generally divided into two

types: *maruhon* kabuki and *junn* kabuki. *Maruhon* kabuki are those adopted from *joururi*, while *junn* kabuki are those originally written for kabuki.

Its content could be classified into two main categories, *jidaimono* and *sewamono*. *Jidaimono* deals with matters concerning pre-Edo, the aristocracy of the Heian era (794-1185), or the warrior family or Buddhist priests of the Kamakura era (1185-1333), and takes subjects from these events. The characters' names are usually those of their historical counterparts. *Sewamono* deals with the lives of ordinary people of the Edo period, which was the contemporary drama.

There are two kinds of



*Sewamono* in Kamigata: those that dramatized an actual double suicide or murder, and those that depicted the dilemmas caused by the conflicts between *giri* (duty) and *ninjou* (emotions), love affairs, and general dramas of contemporary life. The double suicide dramas written by Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1724) gained so much popularity that a rash of similar double suicides occurred. The authorities banned the performance of double suicide plays in 1723.

*Buyou* (dance) is another important category of kabuki. *Bu*

means *mai* (horizontal movements) and *you* means *odori* (vertical movements). A new style of kabuki developed after the Meiji era and influence from the European theater is called *Shin* (new) kabuki.

## Music

In general, there are three categories of music in kabuki: the instrumental accompaniment for the dance; the narration of the circumstance or scenery, and conversations and lines of the characters, called *gidayu-bushi*; and background and effect music, called *geza* music.

## Makeup

Kabuki makeup is devised to distinguish the characters' gender, age, occupation, nature, and personality at a glance. *Shiro-nuri* (white makeup) is used about 80 percent of the time for good characters. *Tonoko-nuri* (brownish skin color) is for the aged, and red-brownish color is for bad, mean, or comic characters. *Kumadori* (gradation) is used to emphasize the nature of the character, with drawn lines exaggerating the veins and muscles of a face with red, blue, brown, and black cosmetics. Red is used for boys and adolescents who are passionate and have a strong sense of justice. Blue is for evil existence, and black and brown are for devils and evil spirits.

## Roles

The male roles are roughly divided into five categories: *tachiyaku* (good-natured); *katakiyaku* (ill-natured); *doukegata* (clown, fool); *oyajigata* (aged); and *wakashugata* (beautiful and young). The female roles are divided into six categories: *kashagata* (aged); *musumegata* (young); *keisei* (high-ranked prostitute); *nyoubouyaku* (virtuous wife); *akuba* (wicked, evil); and *onnabudou* (strong-minded).





Kyoto Minami-za, a Kabuki theater

## Why people in the Edo period loved kabuki

Sakata Toujurou (1647-1709), one of the most famous kabuki actors in Kamigata, says kabuki is for *nagusame*, comfort and diversion. Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1729), a kabuki and *joururi* writer, says comfort and diversion lie between reality and fantasy. Although kabuki originated as an entertainment for common people, people from all social classes embraced kabuki. They all watched kabuki pursuing *nagusame* through its stories, beautiful actors, colorful costumes, music, songs, and dance.

During the Edo period, the government took an isolationist policy and regulated the people thoroughly, and then established a firm feudalistic state with Confucianism as the basis. The government used the idea of *giri* (duty) to control the samurai (warrior) class, and the idea had spread among the common people before the Genroku period. The idea of *giri* puts the relationship of lord and vassal to the highest level of karma, higher than that of husband and wife or parents and children. *Giri* forced the people of the Edo period to sacrifice their husbands, wives, parents, or children for the sake of

their lords, which conflicts with *ninjou*, or human emotions.

Many kabuki dramas have this conflict between *giri* and *ninjou*. They are the tragedy that depicts the anguish of parting from loved ones. The audience sheds tears because of the protagonists' anguish when they kill their lovers, children, or sometimes themselves. The protagonists' conflicts were the audience's own conflicts. They saw the universal anguish, love, or human weakness in the heroic protagonists in kabuki dramas.

Appreciating kabuki was the catharsis for the people living in the feudalistic society. That is the reason why kabuki became the most popular entertainment of the Edo period.

## Stage conventions: how to enjoy kabuki

There are some essential differences between kabuki and Western drama. Those differences prevent the modern audience, including Japanese who are accustomed to the modern Westernized way of living, from a deeper appreciation of kabuki. Understanding the differences and some stage conventions of kabuki might help lower the defenses

against kabuki.

While Western drama is regarded as representational, which is the imitation of the real world and appeals to the mind of its audience, kabuki is said to be presentational, which presents the essence of the real world and appeals to the emotions and senses of its audience. Kabuki is also said to be stylized naturalism, which means kabuki pursues the reality. In a sense, it is the naturalistic attitude, but kabuki presents the reality in a highly artistic and stylized way.

Unlike Western dramas, which exist also as literary works like Greek tragedies or Shakespeare's dramas, kabuki dramas do not exist as literary works on their own. This is because kabuki drama is a composite art that consists of drama, music, and dancing, and makes full use of audio-visual effects, and sometimes even involves the audience in order to create the theatrical space. One cannot fully appreciate kabuki dramas from books, but must go to the theater and become part of its theatrical space.

Western drama demonstrates the dramatic conflicts between man and his inevitable fate, or between individual and conventional society, logically, through words. Traditional Japanese drama also has the dramatic conflicts, but to reveal those conflicts is not the main purpose. Kabuki tries to give the audience catharses with feelings and suggestiveness caused by the satisfaction of the senses through the process of a dramatic plot.

For this purpose, kabuki has some particular stage conventions:

1. Kabuki is an actor-centered drama.
2. Kabuki involves the audience.
3. Kabuki ignores the rules of three unities.

One must enjoy the fantastic world of kabuki using their imagination freely. Do not think too much, but feel the existence of universal human nature in the performance.





# Kabuki, now & future

Three kabuki actors – Kataoka Shimanajo, Ichikawa Hakотора, and Yamamura Masao – illustrate kabuki from an actor's point of view.

By Matsuda Mitsue

## A kabuki actor from Kyoto

Kataoka Shimanajo, whose real name is Kabata Motoi, is a kabuki actor from Kyoto. Born in Kyoto in 1950, Shimanajo's parents were high school teachers.

Shimanajo was a brilliant student and attended the engineering department at Kyoto University, one of Japan's most prestigious universities. He changed his major to education and joined the boat club, but soon discovered the theater's charm. Shimanajo withdrew from the university and started to prepare for his dream of becoming an actor of *shingeki*, the Western-style drama newly developed in modern Japan, and to produce movies. But his future dream changed when he saw kabuki for the first time at the Minami-za, a theater in Kyoto.

Shimanajo was struck with the mysterious and marvelous world of kabuki. His eager appeal to the manager at Minami-za landed him a part-time job as the operator of a hand-powered elevator that carried actors from the stage, through the trap cellar, and to the dressing rooms during the play. The operator needed skill and knowledge to carry the actors as the play progressed.

"I could memorize each play in two days," Shimanajo recalled. "I would watch the plays from the wings of the stage at intervals of my job. On my day off, I usually watched kabuki, from morning till night, from the backseat on the third floor. At home, I would imitate the actors' elocutions."

But he had never thought of becoming a kabuki actor himself. The world of kabuki is still regarded

as a special place for special people, for instance, those born into kabuki actor families. The actors from these hereditary families play the major roles on the regular stages. But a major turning point changed Shimanajo's life.



Kataoka Shimanajo

In 1978, Kataoka Takao (present Nizaemon XV), one of the most beloved and respected kabuki actors, discovered this industrious, talented, and stage-struck young elevator operator, and scouted him for his pupil.

"There was no logical solution why I decided to accept that offer," Shimanajo said. "I was just like manipulated by something invisible. My body moved by itself. I thought, 'I can live only once, then why don't I do what I want to do?'"

Shimanajo started a new life as a pupil of Nizaemon XV, and was given a stage name as Kataoka Kojiro (later changed to Shimanajo).

"I started late, which is called 'middle age' in the kabuki world," Shimanajo said. "In general, kabuki actors start their training when they are children of 5 or 6 years old. Though at first I wanted to do both *tachiyaku* (male role) and *onna-gata* (female role), I decided to apply myself to *onna-gata* for fear that I might have done both unsatisfactory."

Now, Shimanajo has an excellent reputation for his graceful and refined *onna-gata*. He talks about *onna-gata* and femininity in a speech, which he wrote in English, and gave in a lecture in Montreal, Canada.

"Many splendid female role actors made the style of expression in a sophisticated way the graceful action, gentle utterance," Shimanajo said. "The way to wear clothes as well. The design of beautiful and gaudy kimono dress was pursued, and the way to dress the wigs and the variation of ornament were designed. In Japanese, what they pursued was '*iroke*,' the ideal beauty of woman. Then what is *iroke*? It includes eroticism in a narrow sense, the delicate color nuance, softness, mellowness, gentle heart, amorous, and coquettish atmosphere, etc. These qualities are what people pursue in womanhood. Actors pursue the graceful action through hard exercise of dancing."

"Female role acting, which tries to make the audiences notice not womanish manners but the essence of womanly manners, is extremely stylized and exaggerated. It is not





necessarily to be realistic, but to be rather deformed acting."

As a result of his devotion to kabuki, Shimanojo passed the *nadai* examination in 1998. *Nadai* is an actor status. Kabuki actors are divided into two groups: *nadai* and *nadai-shita*, or under *nadai*. Only *nadai* actors are permitted to hang their *maneki*, literally "invitation," a signboard with a name, in front of Minami-za in Kyoto, and Misono-za in Nagoya. Also, they are given their own *yago*, a title or style; *mon*, a crest; and their own dressing rooms.

Nizaemon XV, Shimanojo's master, gave him a new name, *yago*, and *mon*. During *nadai-shita*, his stage name was Kojiro, but now he is called Shimanojo.

Shimanojo's *yago* is Sakuragi-ya, which means "blessing of cherry blossoms," and his crest is "five ginkgo leaves with one wild cherry blossom."

Besides leading busy days as a kabuki actor, Shimanojo also participates actively in spreading the joy of kabuki by giving

lectures and demonstrations. In his demonstration called, "How to perform *onna-gata*," he shows the audience the process of putting on makeup, wigs, and costumes so that the audience can see how a man can transform himself into a woman, not a drag queen, but a beautiful, graceful princess. Then, he shows his dancing and charms the audience with his beauty and grace.

He was invited to Canada two years ago, visited seven places in Montreal and Toronto, and gave lectures and demonstrations. In his speech, he explains the charm of kabuki: "Every time I am asked 'what is most likely for your image of kabuki?' I answer, 'It is *hana*, or flowers,' because *hana* has very deep

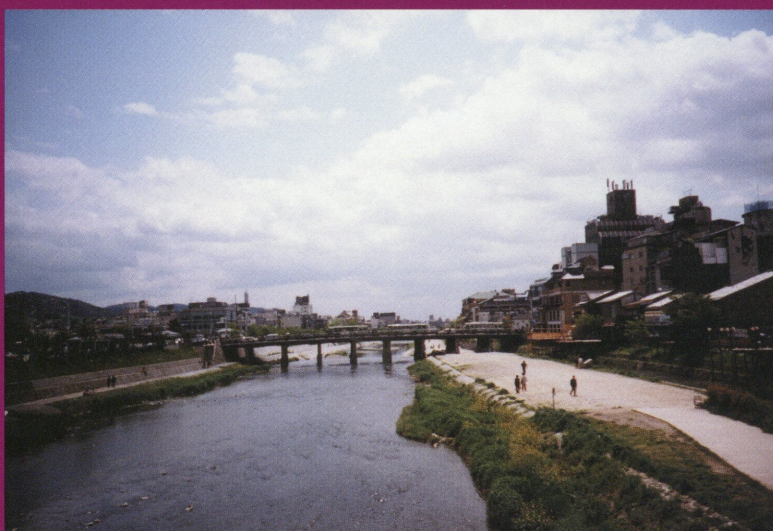
relationship with kabuki. *Hana* means not only flowers, but also expresses a Japanese aesthetic sense. We sometimes use the word *hana* for praising an actor who has radiant power, 'he (she) has great *hana*.' Also, we call young and beautiful actors '*hanagata*,' with the meaning that they are like flower shape. We have many words related with flower in kabuki. The kabuki world is full of flowers, and it is to say kabuki is the flower itself. *Sakura*, or cherry blossom, is the Japanese national flower, and is also the most important flower in kabuki. The *sakura* flower is graceful, but its

emotion is irrespective of the class, age, or sex. And kabuki is the same. Common people love to watch kabuki, and such common people have been assisting and bringing up kabuki. Kabuki is an art for the common people. I wish kabuki to be loved by all common people all over the world."

"Before I entered the kabuki world, I used to love books full of mysteries and fantasies, and often times I dreamed a dream, in which I was standing at a crossroads," Shimanojo said. "I think I was searching for my identity and hoping to escape from the reality to the

world full of fantasy. But now, I am not attracted to fantasies very much. I do not dream of crossroads. The reason is that I am living in a world of kabuki, full of mysteries, fantasies, spectacles, and beauty."

In Kyoto, before he goes to his dressing room in the *Minami-za*, Shimanojo always stops on the *Shijo* Bridge over the *Kamo* River, which flows by



Kamo River

KahoringLiving

beauty ends too soon and is gone with the spring wind. Its best finishes like a dream. There is an idea for beauty, '*mono no aware*,' having a feeling for fleeting things, in Japan. We sometimes set a high value on things that are fragile and fleeting. I cannot pass over the effect of the *noh* play, which was most popular for its dance before kabuki. *Zeami*, who accomplished *noh* dance, said that '*hi sureba hana nari*' in his master book titled, *Fuushi Kaden*, or '*Wind, Shape, and Flower Story*.' Its general meaning is that to conceal something makes it brighten. I can say that this idea is one of the key factors of Japanese culture. Japanese people have loved full-blown cherry blossoms over the centuries. This

the *Minami-za*, and looks at the view of *Kitayama*.

"It is a kind of a ritual for me to view the ridgeline of *Kitayama* and flowing *Kamo* River from the *Shijo* Bridge, which seems like the everlasting scenery, the same view which Okuni saw 400 years ago, before I entered the fantasy world of kabuki," he said.

## Challenge KABUKI!

In 1997, I took part in a training session called Challenge KABUKI III held near Osaka. In that five-month session, 37 trainees (office workers, shopkeepers, housewives, etc.) learned how to produce a kabuki drama, "*Shinpan Utazaimon* — *Nozaki-mura no Ba*."





*Ichikawa Hakatora teaches a Kabuki student how to apply makeup*

*It was an amazing experience to perform a kabuki drama, though it might be called self-satisfaction. But what is more important is that while there, I met a wonderful teacher of kabuki, Ichikawa Hakatora, 72, a former kabuki actor. He had never been a big name in the kabuki world, and yet I believe that Hakatora would become a bridge between the tradition and the future of kabuki.*

Hakatora was born in Chiba Prefecture as a farmer's son. After he graduated from evening classes at a senior high school, he went to Nihon University in Tokyo, to major in theater. At the university, he belonged to the Kabuki Club for four years. One of his clubmates was the late Arashi Tokusaburou, who was a good kabuki actor well known for playing the leading parts in *Media* and other plays for director Ninagawa Yukio. After four years at the university, Hakatora entered Shochiku, a production company to which all kabuki actors belonged.

"Shochiku wanted only Tokusaburou, for he was a star in the university kabuki world," Hakatora said. "But the university forced

Shochiku to employ other kabuki students all together. I was neither a good or enthusiastic student."

In general, every kabuki actor who comes from the outside world becomes a private disciple of a master, who is a hereditary kabuki actor. Hakatora became a disciple of the late Nakamura Ganjiro II.

"I was very stubborn, so that no one wanted me but my master Ganjiro," Hakatora said.

Ganjiro was the Japanese Living Treasure, and was known for reviving the obsolete kabuki dramas, featuring manners and customs in Kamigata (in the Kyoto and Osaka areas).

"My master was really a great actor," Hakatora said. "On the stage, he looked huge, though he was only five feet and a few inches high. When he died in 1983, I decided to quit Shochiku. I knew I could never find anyone like my master Ganjiro."

Since then, Hakatora has devoted himself to promote kabuki to those who are not familiar with it, especially school children. Many Japanese have misconceptions about kabuki — that kabuki is old-

fashioned, difficult to understand, and snobbish — without going to a theater. Actually, most of the 37 members of Challenge KABUKI! had not seen kabuki before they took part in the session.

"Kabuki is an entertainment for common people like you and me," Hakatora said. "Just having fun and diversion is all right. I want everybody to enjoy kabuki either by watching it or acting."

Hakatora spends most of his time teaching kabuki, preparing for the performance, and making costumes and properties. He works during the night from 1-6 a.m. for a food catering company, and sleeps only four hours a day.

His money, of course, is all spent on kabuki, though he has not been to the theater for years.

Hakatora holds training sessions and gives lectures for both adults and school children without tuition, and visits the old people's homes with his amateur kabuki company. The stage for his activity is not limited to the Kansai area. He goes anywhere if asked, even outside of Japan.

In summer 2001, he visited three cities in China and Mongolia with some of his pupils, all elementary school children, to perform kabuki. His dream is to travel to New York with his young pupils and perform kabuki.

*After talking with Hakatora on the telephone, I asked for some pictures for this article. He said, "I am sorry, I have no pictures of mine. Instead, could I send you a copy of my elementary school pupils?" He sent me some color copies of the pictures of his young pupils, and in one of the pictures, I found Hakatora giving the closing address to the audience in front of his pupils. I remembered our performance four years ago, and thought how proud I am to have been a pupil of Hakatora.*



# Kabuki,

## an interview with a freshman

Yamamura Masao, 27, recently graduated from Kamigata Kabuki Juku, a training school for kabuki actors, and started his career as an *onna-gata*, a male actor who performs a female role. In this interview, Masao speaks of the charm of kabuki and of his aspirations.



Yamamura Masao

*Interviewer: Could you tell us when and how you were attracted to kabuki?*

Masao: Ever since I was in elementary school, I always liked to watch *jidaigeki* or historical dramas on television. Especially, I was interested in those dramas that have their settings in the Edo period (1603-1867) and started learning the lifestyles and systems of Edo. As you know, kabuki was the entertainment for common people of the Edo period and flourished in the Genroku era (1688-1704). Kabuki strongly attracted me with its gorgeous atmosphere of the Edo period, colorful and luxurious costumes, beautiful music, stage settings, properties, and everything.

*Interviewer: When did you decide to become a professional actor?*

Masao: In 1996, when I was 22 years old, I took part in

Challenge KABUKI! II, a training session for kabuki held by Ichikawa Hakотора. I played for the first time. I really enjoyed playing, so I joined Hakотора's amateur kabuki company, Miotsukushi. Also, I started to learn Japanese dance. When I was 25 years old, I decided to take the selection examination for Kamigata Kabuki Juku, a training school for professional kabuki actors. It was my last chance, because the school has an age limit. It is 25 years old. Then, luckily, I passed the examination.

*Interviewer: Tell us more about the school. What did you learn there?*

Masao: There were eight pupils. Most of the pupils were from ordinary families, such as office workers and storekeepers. We had classes all day from Monday to Friday for two years and the school fee was free. We learned practical kabuki skills, Japanese traditional dances and songs, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, makeup, fighting scenes, musical instruments, sewing kimono, Japanese paintings, calligraphy, storytelling of comic and historical stories, etc. The teachers were all professionals. After the graduation in March, we are having practical training now. Finally, each of us will become a private pupil of a hereditary master and will be given a stage name in November.

*Interviewer: Sometimes kabuki seems old fashioned for its feudalistic ideas, Confucianism, and metempsychosis. For an actor, isn't it difficult to sympathize with the characters?*

Masao: I do not think so, because I believe human nature never changes with the times. Even if we could not understand the inevitability of lovers' suicide in a kabuki story, yet we can

appreciate the strong love between a man and woman. Love is the theme of suicide dramas and what we actors try to represent.

*Interviewer: As an actor who plays female roles, at what point do you see the feminine attraction?*

Masao: I see the feminine attraction, or feminine beauty, in a behavior of a woman who shows respect for a man, and stands a half step behind with self-control and modesty. About the appearance, I see the beauty in a graceful carriage, beautiful makeup, and an elegant costume.

*Interviewer: Lastly, please tell us your aspirations?*

Masao: My aspiration is to become an actor who is not ignored by the audience. I want to hear people say, "He is some actor!" Since the kabuki world takes the patrimonial system, it is difficult to play the leading parts for those who are not from distinguished families. But I think the patrimonial system has many advantages. For example, those who come from distinguished families start training when they are 5 or 6 years old so that they can acquire high-level skills in acting, dancing, and singing, and they work as the traction for the development of kabuki. Actually, I see a kind of aura around them. Of course, we who are from outside the kabuki world will make the best efforts to improve ourselves. Then both of us will be able to improve ourselves through friendly rivalry.

To put it concretely, I would like to pass the *nadai* examination after 10 years.

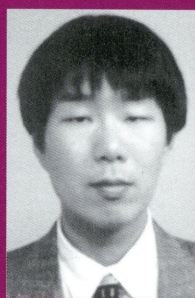
I wish to see my *maneki*, a sign permitted to be hung at the front of kabuki theaters only for actors who passed the *nadai* examination.





# A Japanese view of American landscape

By Mitsuru Sanada



Japanese may have difficulty finding information about American art, especially paintings. Andy Warhol, Jackson Pollock, Japer Johns, Georgia O'Keeffe, Edward

Hopper — aren't they famous in Japan? Even Roy Liechtenstein's work can be seen at Kyoto Station.

These artists are all great 20<sup>th</sup> century painters. Many books about American art enlighten Japanese on paintings after World War II. However, few Japanese books on 19<sup>th</sup> century American paintings exist. Is this a situation found only in Japan?

I tried to find some information on the Internet — Web Museum, [<http://watt.emf.net>] — to get a global view. The "Theme Index" has the section, "Revolution and Restoration (1740-1860)," where American paintings are introduced only in the "other countries" group. Even on the Internet, it is not easy to find antebellum American paintings.

Why do I have a curiosity about the early American paintings? Because they are the doorways to understanding the culture, and in a broader sense, the history of the United States.

Landscapes unfamiliar to a stranger provide abundant surprises and discoveries that transform prejudiced views into profound appreciation. Familiar landscapes also reveal some unknown aspects

— amazing facts — to the audience. A river viewed from a residential window, or even a streetscape of the neighborhood, can cause one to find another aspect in the landscape.

Most Japanese are familiar with American landscape images. Mass media, mostly through television, present typical American scenes. Above all, one of the most familiar landscapes to the Japanese is that of nature.

Perry Miller epitomizes the character of antebellum American landscape. In the Old World, artists painted only garden landscapes, but in America, nature was "not man's but God's." In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, American painters saw nature face-to-face, a universal theme in American landscape paintings.

A Japanese critic said, quoting *Niagara Falls* (1857) by Frederic Edwin Church, that early American painters tried to be true to nature — trees, mountains, valley, prairie, streams, falls, and clouds. The United States is a country of realism, and realism is the characteristic that stands out in American art.

Japanese believe art must always exist above or below nature. Therefore, Japanese audiences think this type of realistic picture appears to have incoherence because such art appears to exist in the neutral level, ignoring that it cannot exist in such a space. We are always thinking that this is a characteristic unique to American paintings.

According to Kenneth Clark, we can trace the origin of landscape painting to the Crusades during the late Middle Ages. There had been dark and wild nature, but at that time, "the idea of a flowery meadow" was cut off from the world. The landscape was seen as "some whole which would be within the compass of the imagination and itself a symbol of perfection. This was achieved by the discovery of the garden."

A garden, a term also used by Miller, refers to the representation of

nature, that is to say, the domesticated landscape. Such a garden is a part of the imaginative faculty. We might conclude that "the inside" of a man has been established as landscape and landscape has existed as a part of human nature.

This mental activity is best described in R.W. Emerson's thoughts. His "transparent eyeball," a famous Romantic self-portrait that can be understood as a part of nature, once experienced "the Universal Being" "circulating through" him.

Therefore, contemporary American painters would capture landscapes only when they captured landscapes as a part of themselves. We could reach the conclusion that this is why American realistic landscape painting tries to exist neither above nor below nature.

Do you humanize a landscape? You cannot always do so. We have to remember an environment always has the power to force a man to surrender.

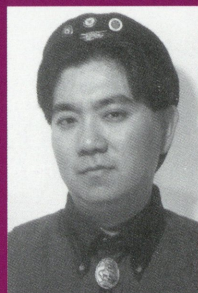
These double phases of the relationship between landscape and humanity are, again, best described in Emerson's thoughts. His optimistic Romanticism didn't last long. His idea was to change the way of nature, claiming, "No picture of life can have any veracity that does not admit the odious facts."

Yes, some landscape painters' brushes inscribe cultivated farms. Farms are the signs of environmental destruction. But man cultivates farms as he cultivates his mind. This is the ironic side of the reason that American realistic landscape paintings try to exist neither above nor below nature. Such farms and the revision of Emerson's thought make us realize that the important thing to remember is that landscapes must be taken in the relativity between landscape and human being — the interaction between them. How would 19<sup>th</sup> century Americans, people who celebrated nature as divine, have responded to the Kyoto treaty on global warming?



# *Shichinin no Samurai* (The Seven Samurai) & *The Magnificent Seven* Jidai-Geki (Japanese costume play) meets the Western

By Yoshiya Nishi



America has turned out many "world-famous" film directors — John Ford, Orson Welles, Francis Ford Coppola, Woody Allen, George Lucas, Steven Spielberg,

Stanley Kubrick — and many others. Well, it is easy for us to mention the names of the American film directors, but how many Americans are able to mention the names of Japanese "world-famous" film directors?

Probably just two names come to mind: Kurosawa Akira and Kitano Takeshi. These two film directors won the top prize at the Venice Film Festival — Akira in 1951 for *Rashomon*, and Takeshi in 1997 for *HANA-BI*. Akira is probably more familiar than Takeshi to American audiences because Akira also won a special Oscar as best foreign picture of 1951 for *Rashomon*.

*Shichinin no Samurai* (1954) is a Jidai-Geki (period costume play or drama in Japanese) directed by Akira, and *The Magnificent Seven* (1960) is the Western adaptation (or Hollywood version) of Akira's *Shichinin no Samurai*, directed by the American film director, John Sturges.

It is interesting to try to compare these films. Since films are created for entertainment, and are usually directed to suit the audiences' tastes at the time the film is made, in order to be a commercial success, it can be used as a means to find their

respective cultural values. In this case, both films have almost identical plots, so the characters from both films placed into almost the same circumstances. This helps us to see the ideal heroic figures that represent their cultural values in each culture.

## The Story: [*Shichinin no Samurai*]

Some time in the Age of Civil Wars in Japan, there was a small village that was invaded by a group of 40 bandits. These bandits killed many peasants and plundered their crops. One day, one of the villagers overheard the bandits' conversation, when they came to scout the village. They would soon attack the village again. As soon as he returned to the village, the villager informed everyone about what he had heard.

The elders of the village gathered and decided to hire a group of *ronin*, masterless samurai, to fight the bandits. These elders sent several members of the village to search for samurai whom they could hire. The villagers' search for the samurai did not succeed at first, because the samurai were too proud to be hired by peasants. But one day, the villagers were fortunate to meet Kambei, who later became the leader of the seven samurai.

Kambei hesitated to be hired by the peasants at first because of his age, but Kambei consented to the deal (three meals a day, but no money) presented by the peasants because he sympathized with the poor villagers. With Kambei's help, the villagers could hire six other samurai on the same terms. This was possible because of Kambei's

personal grace, which the six other samurai were attracted to. Otherwise, it would have been impossible to make the deal for such a poor reward.

After the seven samurai and the recruiting villagers arrived at the village, they started to prepare for the war. At first, there was a great gap between the seven samurai and the peasants. However, through the preparation for war, the bond between the seven samurai and the villagers grew tighter. The time had come, and the war between the village and the bandits broke out.

During several attacks, the seven samurai and the villagers eliminated the bandits one by one, and eventually they killed all the bandits. However, four members of the seven samurai were killed in the battle. In exchange for their lives, peace was restored to the farming village. Then, the three surviving samurai left the village, and proceeded on their way.

The story of *The Magnificent Seven* is identical to *Shichinin no Samurai*, except the main characters were "gunfighters" instead of "samurai." Also, there is a remarkable difference in the last scene. In *Shichinin no Samurai*, all three samurai left the village after the battle was over, but in *The Magnificent Seven*, one of the three survivors, the youngest member, stayed in the village and married a girl with whom he had fallen in love.

## Comparison of main characters

The structure of main characters in *Shichinin no Samurai* and *The Magnificent Seven* are similar, and there are counterparts for each



character in the films. For instance, Chris, the leader of the “gunfighters” played by Yul Brynner, is the counterpart of Kambei, the leader of the seven samurai. Both leaders, Kambei and Chris, have an excellent ability to lead people and are respected by the other members of the group. They seem to have many things in common, yet there are many differences as well.

Among those differences, the motivation to save the farmers is the most remarkable difference in these two characters. For Kambei, the motivation to fight the bandits is based on his feeling of sympathy and benevolence. On the other hand, Chris’ motivation to fight the bandits is based on his sense of duty to stand up against unreasonable forces. In other words, Kambei’s motivation is based on his emotion or emotional reasons, and Chris’ motivation is based on his feeling of injustice, or ethical reasons.

As a whole, the comparisons of the other main characters from these

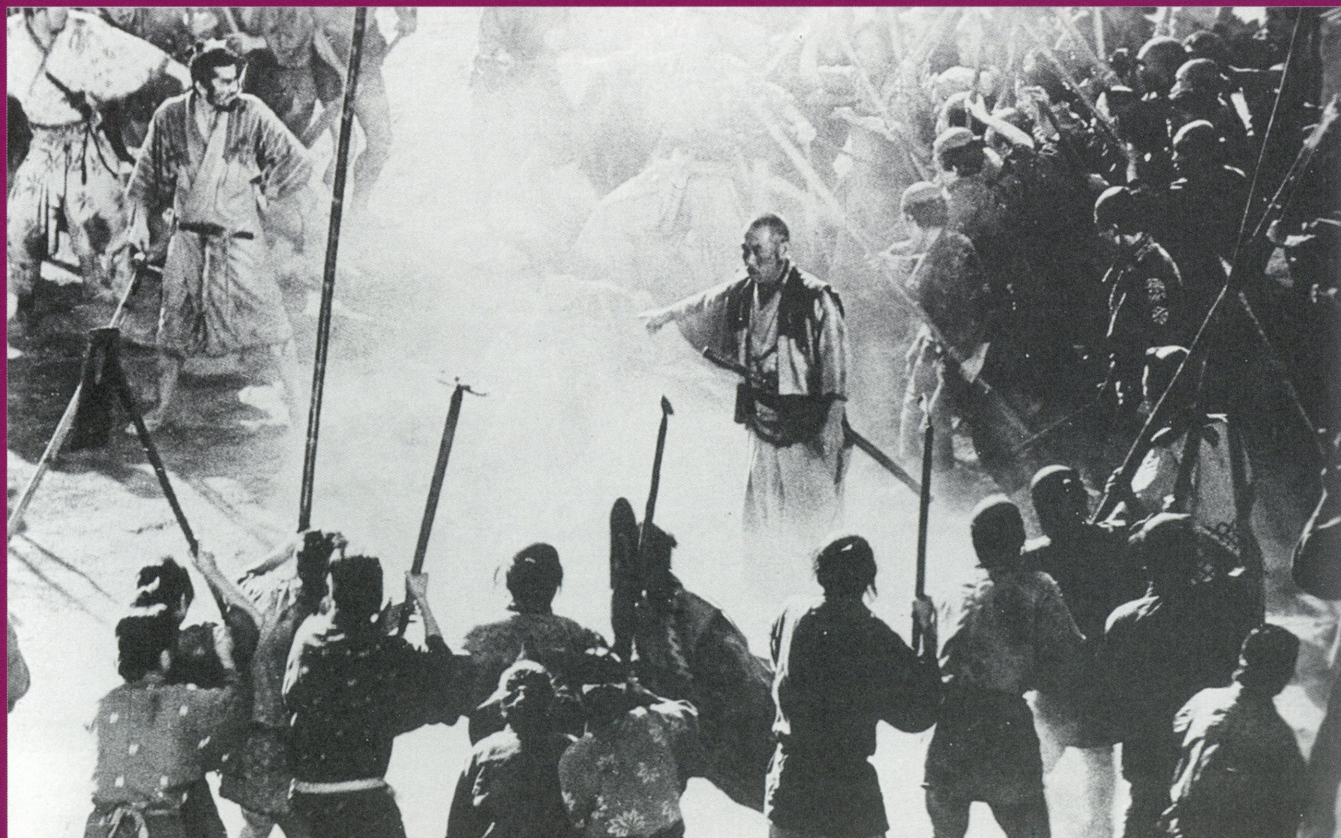
two films follow the same pattern as the comparison between the leaders. However, the comparison of the youngest members in each film, Katsushiro in *Shichinin no Samurai* and The Kid in *The Magnificent Seven*, is remarkable. Both Katsushiro and The Kid are the youngest members of their groups, and have ideal images of adulthood and combat. In other words, they both wish to be the real fighters (as their leaders). Like their leaders, Katsushiro and The Kid have many similarities and many differences. In fact, their differences represent the most remarkable difference between these two films.

At the end, Katsushiro left the village with the other samurai, leaving his woman behind and preferring to study the way of a samurai warrior. The Kid stayed in the village with his woman. This difference represents the treatment of women and their position in society, both in Japan and the United States, at the time the films were made.

### As a conclusion

Regardless of the comparison between Katsushiro and The Kid, one may conclude that the characters of *Shichinin no Samurai* are portrayed as romantic “heroic” figures, and the film tries to show the ideal image of the samurai warrior and their virtues. On the other hand, the characters of *The Magnificent Seven* are portrayed as more realistic “human” figures, with internal conflicts of interest that are sometimes altruistic and selfish. Although this film is set in the “Old West,” it is also a realistic social drama that analyzes the characters as “real” people.

By comparing these two films, it can also be concluded that at the time when these films were made (1960s), Japanese audiences enjoyed watching virtuous, self-sacrificing heroes in simple “good against evil” films. On the other hand, American audiences watched realistic, “ordinary people” type heroes in more sophisticated “social drama” films.



A scene from *The Seven Samurai*



# Japanese Origami

By Eiko Shiota



Nowadays, Japanese origami is well known all over the world as the art of paper folding. For example, there are many manuals and Web sites dealing with origami. Of

course, origami is still popular in Japan with people of all ages: amusement for children, methods of folding letters for the young, and finger exercises for the elderly.

## The origin of origami

The origin of origami is not exactly known, so there are many views on it: folding clothes in the Heian period (794-1192), wrapping papers in religious ceremony, and so on. The only tool needed for origami is a piece of square paper. Paper is rarely cut because it is considered a sacred object. In Japanese, the sound of paper, *kami*, is similar to that of God (*kami*). Thus, each view on the origin of origami is deeply concerned with Shinto and Buddhist religious rituals.

## The oldest origami book in existence

*Hidden Senbazuru Orikata (How to Fold One Thousand Cranes)*, published in 1797 by Tamehachi Yoshinoya in Kyoto, is the oldest existing origami book for amusement in the world. This book explains 49 methods to make more than two cranes from one paper square. The

authors of the book are Yoshimichi Sato, whose pseudonym is Rokouan, and Ritou Akisato. The book includes inscriptions and comic *tanka*. The art of origami this book instructs is difficult and requires high skill levels to complete. Thus, many fans have been puzzled by this book over the centuries.

## Development as an amusement

Origami as an amusement appeared during the Muromachi period (1338-1578). However, before the Edo period (1603-1867), the nobility folded paper mainly as a sort of etiquette. The figures were called *noshi* and were attached to gifts and sent to aristocrats or the Imperial Court. After the middle of the Edo period, folding paper as an amusement gradually became in vogue among the public. The way of origami was called *orikata* (folded shape) at that time. In the Meiji period (1868-1912), because of the modernization of Japan, origami began to spread rapidly. The origami paper changed from *washi*, traditional Japanese paper, to Western paper. This helped spread origami as paper because it could be mass produced cheaply. It was after the Meiji period that many school textbooks began to be published detailing how to create figures with the art of origami.



*Noshi exchanged at engagement event*



*Noshi used for wrapping money*

## A brief history of origami papers

Is Japanese origami paper the same as Western folding paper? The answer is no. They are quite different. This fact is often neglected. Paper in Japan came from China via Korea in 610. Since then, it has developed in its own way and was called *washi*. It was about 1,400 years after the invention of paper in China that paper spread to Europe and America. In fact, two different papers were imported into Japan. The former one came from Eastern countries at the beginning of the seventh century, the latter came from Western countries in the middle of the 19th century. In other words, Japanese origami was invented by



virtue of the East and spread by virtue of the West. It is this mixture of two kinds of papers that allows Japanese origami art to still survive.

*A flower made of washi*

## Varieties of origami

Origami figures have various uses. They can be divided roughly into two categories: daily life and amusement. The simple examples of origami for daily life are *noshi* or wrapping paper for gifts and letter folding. Young Japanese, especially schoolgirls, fold letters in special



ways because they can cover the face of the letter so it looks lovely.



*The most popular letter fold among schoolgirls*

Some Japanese make trash bins with inserts. They are easy to fold, useful, and disposable. When Japanese eat oranges at a *kotatsu* — a low, Japanese-style, heated table set with a futon or cover in the winter — they place an origami bin on the table and throw orange peels into the bin.



*A trash bin made of insert*

Origami used for amusement is more common. Most origami is used for children's toys. Origami figures include animals, birds, flowers, humans, vehicles, and so on.

*Kamifūsen*, a paper balloon, is one of the famous toys for children.



*Kamifūsen with air inside*



The most famous origami figure is a crane. Almost all Japanese can make a crane without difficulty. It is often used as a children's toy.

*The simple crane*

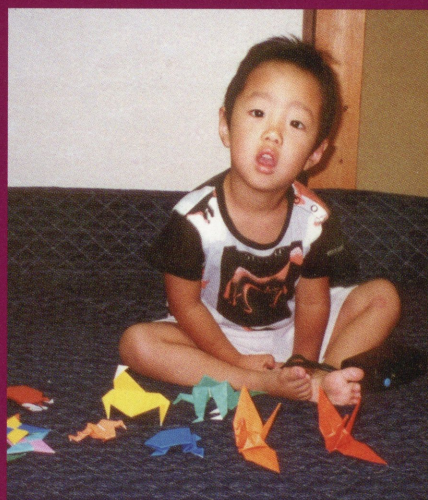
However, the crane also has serious aspects and can be used for ceremonies.

## Wishes folded into a paper

*Senbazuru*, or 1,000 cranes, is deeply related to the old Japanese saying, "*Tsuru wa sen nen, Kame wa*

*man nen*," which means "A crane lives for a thousand years and a tortoise 10,000." Because a crane is considered a symbol of longevity, people believe they can live longer by making cranes. Thus, 1,000 paper cranes are used as a way for a person with an illness to recover or for peace.

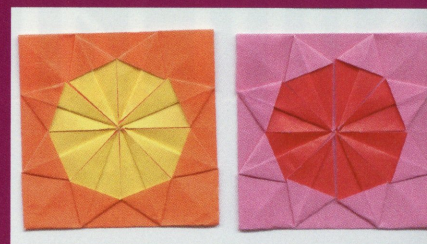
*Senbazuru* consists of 1,000 cranes connected by strings. They are different from the thousand cranes that are mentioned in *Senbazuru Orikata*. The *Senbazuru* mentioned here are made of 1,000 papers, usually folded by more than one person. The *Senbazuru* mentioned before is made of only one paper, folded by only one person, and its number is not exactly 1,000. In spite of the difference between them, the wishes people fold into cranes are the same.



*A boy playing with origami*

The Japanese origami has been loved in and out of Japan for years. Origami has many fans and associations in more than 20 countries. While the traditional method remains, new complicated arts are invented each day. Origami is no longer old rituals. It is no longer learned only at home, but kindergartens and elementary schools also instruct the art of origami. It can be said that origami is a part of the lives in Japan. But why?

What is the fascination of origami? Maybe there is no end to the reason.



*Coaster Origami*

## Cool Web sites on origami

### Origami Tanteidan

[<http://www.origami.gr.jp/>]

The official Web site of the Japan Origami Academic Society exhibiting the world's oldest origami book, *Hidden Senbazuru Orikata*, and essays on origami.

### Multilingual Origami Page

[<http://www.netpark.or.jp/origami/origamie.html>]

Interesting site that explains the method and art of origami with animation in Chinese, English, Germany, Russian, Spanish, and other languages.

### Joseph Wu's Origami Page

[<http://www.origami.vancouver.bc.ca/index.html>]

The most famous origami site in the world, giving instructions, pictures, diagrams, articles, and more on origami.

### Envelope and Letter Folding

[<http://www.ghh.com/elf/>]

This page explains the how-to's of folding envelopes and letter s using writing paper and origami paper.

### OrigamiUSA: Folding the World

[<http://www.origami-usa.org/>]

Non-profit origami association in the United States providing information of origami events, resources, fun stuffs, and shopping.

### paperfolding.com: Eric's Origami Page

[<http://www.paperfolding.com/>]

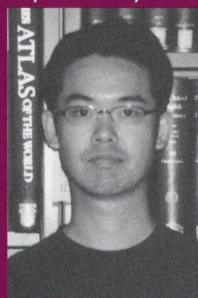
Useful Web site with resources, history, links, and the relationship between origami and math.





# Sign language in Kyoto

By Hiroyuki Shimada



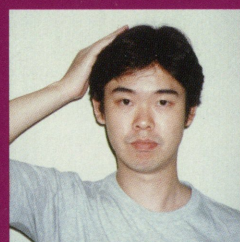
As with vocal language, sign language has many dialects. Some signs are unique to Kyoto.

In 1977, the first television program for the deaf started on NHK (National

Broadcasting Corporation). Two years later, an NHK investigation explored the comprehension of sign language broadcast on television. As a result, it was discovered that signs in Kyoto, Hokkaido, and Hiroshima are different from other areas. The investigation gave an opportunity for the fieldwork of sign language in Kyoto.

Sign language seems to vary according to individuals; in other words, it starts as a home sign. Then the deaf form bigger groups. The Kyoto Deaf School was the first deaf education institution in Japan. Deaf students graduate from the school and are employed in traditional industries. The formation of deaf groups develops individual signs into a pervasive sign language in some areas. There are some signs rooted in Kyoto based on the following description.

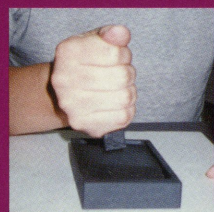
First, in regard to signs about color, a typical example is black. In standard sign language, especially in



Tokyo, black is represented by touching one's hair. This expression is derived from the fact that the Japanese

normally have black hair. But some people may have an unkind question: how do they sign when they become bald or turn gray? Those who live in Tokyo use the same sign, even when their hair color changes.

In Kyoto, on the contrary, black is derived from ink painting. This style of painting was brought to Japan from China by Zen monks and became popular in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. At the deaf school in Kyoto, ink painting is taught to students. The sign for black repre-



sents grinding an ink stick.

The fist of the right hand, thumb side up, rests in the open left palm, and on it, the right fist is

rubbed repeatedly. The palm expresses *suzuri*, an ink stone, and the fist means *sumi*, ink stick. The ink stick is permanently black, though the shading of the ink color expresses depth and variety.

The students of the deaf school often obtain jobs dyeing goods like kimono, one of the most traditional industries in Kyoto. They work as apprentices at the dyeing factory. While an ink stick is normally picked up with the thumb and index finger, when grinding an ink stick, workers in Kyoto grip the ink stick because only in this way can they continue to grind an ink stick for a long time.

In association with the sign for black, there is an interesting sign in Kyoto. As I have shown, the sign for black is derived from ink painting. The Chinese character for ink stick, *sumi*, is similar with the one for black, *kuro*. Strictly speaking, the

Chinese character for black is part of the one for ink stick.

Moreover, the one of *sato*, which means hometown, is also the part of ink stick. A long time ago, the character of

*sato* was used as a unit of distance, in which case we call the character *ri*, and one *ri* is four kilometers. So, in terms of the similarity of

the three Chinese characters, deaf people in Kyoto became use to the same sign in order to represent ink, black, and kilometer. In short, the sign for distance is a loaned word from a Chinese character. In this case, it is interesting that the sign means not four kilometers but one kilometer.

Another expression is derived from labor. It is the sign for color, which is derived from mixing colors by a finger. The tip of the middle finger of the right hand describes a small circle in the upturned left palm. Only this finger can be used. The index finger or the third one is used to pick something up, especially papers or cloth in work. So, when these fingers have paint on them, an apprentice is scolded by the master.

Black

Ink stick

Hometown





The sign by the palm and the middle finger also means “what” in the same hand shape and movement. This is derived from the gesture of deaf apprentices asking what colors they should mix. That is, the sign for “color” and “what” is deeply rooted in the labor of the traditional industry in Kyoto.

By the way, the standard sign for “color” is derived from “painting tube.” With fingers touching their thumbs, both hands are brought together and twisted. This movement represents the manner of twisting the cap off the paint tube. Some people may make an unkind statement as, “When was the painting tube invented?” “Is the sign of color present long before the invention of the tube?”

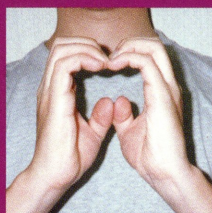
The sign for “white” is also unique in Kyoto. The sign is derived from the color of powder. The thumb and index finger of the right hand, forming a circle, are held at the height of the cheek and move along the cheek. The circle represents picking up a brush and this movement is putting on powder. In Kyoto, powder is famous as geisha makeup. In other areas, on the contrary, the sign for “white” is derived from the color of teeth.

*Sign language seems to vary according to individuals; in other words, it starts as a home sign. Then the deaf form bigger groups. The Kyoto Deaf School was the first deaf education institution in Japan.*

The mouth opens to the extent that one can see the teeth, and the index finger of the right hand, pointing to the teeth, moves along the teeth from right to left. Then, you

may want to ask how to express this word if one were an old person without teeth.

Other signs besides color terms derived from the labor of deaf people, though they are not ones derived from traditional industry in Kyoto. There is a vocational aid center for people with a high degree of disability. Some deaf people work in the center. One of the jobs is growing vegetables for shipment to market. For example, bell peppers are grown there. The sign for “bell pepper” is derived from the labor there. Bell peppers are harvested when they are a certain size. But it is difficult to indicate what size of bell pepper should be gathered. When an instructor tells deaf people they should pick an appropriate size of bell pepper, they often gather ones too small to be sold. They shape an imaginary bell pepper, bending five



fingers of each hand inward, palms facing each other. When a bell pepper is larger than the hand shape, though the size of

individual hands is more or less different, they are harvested. This custom within the center created the sign for “bell pepper.” The standard sign is derived from the feature that the bell pepper is empty inside. The upward index finger of the right hand moves circularly inside a C-shaped left hand. The movement represents the emptiness of a bell pepper. This sign also means “foolish” because of the metaphorical usage in Japanese. We say “*atama ga karappo*.” *Atama* means “head,” *karappo* “empty,” and *ga* is the marker of the subjective genitive. This sentence means “someone is foolish” metaphorically. Certainly, a bell pepper is empty inside, but it seems to be unwise to use the same sign with “foolish.”

Since I have shown signs derived from labor in Kyoto, I finally intro-

*The students of the deaf school often obtain jobs dyeing goods like kimono, one of the most traditional industries in Kyoto. They work as apprentices at the dyeing factory. While an ink stick is normally picked up with the thumb and index finger, when grinding an ink stick, workers in Kyoto grip the ink stick because only in this way can they continue to grind an ink stick for a long time.*

duce the sign for “work.” The sign for “work” is making four fingers, except the thumb, of both hands bend at the top joint in an L-shape, palms facing each other, and move them inward about twice. This represents sheaving documents. In Kyoto, however, they distinguish signs according to the kind of jobs. The right fist, facing left, is placed on top of the left counterpart, whose palm faces right. The hands are twisted back and forth, striking each other slightly after each twist. While they use the former hand shape to represent work in the office, in the case of labor in the factory, they sign in the latter way.

As we have seen, there are a variety of signs unique to Kyoto. As space is limited, I have mainly shown signs derived from labor in Kyoto.

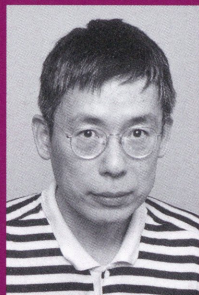
Deaf people in Kyoto find the best way to communicate their thoughts among their group. From a different point of view, the investigation of their signs reveals traditions and customs in Kyoto.





# Haiku & paintings by Buson

By Yuki Sawa



"He is calling me," I said to myself.

At that moment, I was in a coffee shop in Kyoto. I was holding a newspaper in my hands. An article told me about a grand-scale art exhibition of the paintings of Buson, a really large-scale show of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Japanese painter. It was in an art museum in Osaka. The session had already started. From Kyoto, where I live, it's an hour train ride to the museum. Buson is one of my favorite painters, and he was also a haiku poet.

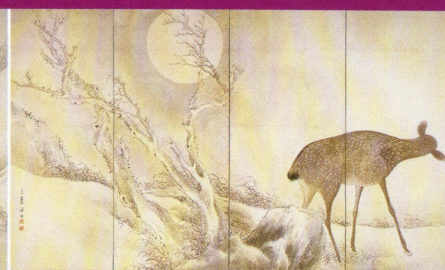
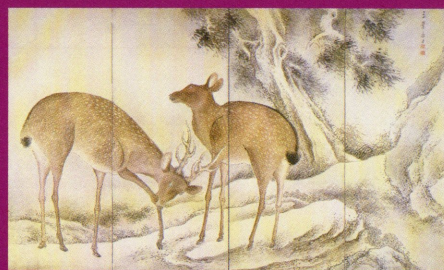
"Buson is calling to me to come. I should go to see him," I thought.

This news came to me by chance. It came as a surprise for me one afternoon in April. I don't take any newspapers at my home, and, in my humble opinion, it is a waste of time to read the newspaper. Or is this an arrogant opinion?

Only when I happen to be in a coffee shop where newspapers are accessible to customers do I read them. And, I go to a coffee shop only once in a while.

But this time, I was really glad that I didn't miss the news about the Buson exhibit. I felt as though it was mental telepathy — he was really calling to me to come.

It is perhaps about a score of years when one can see a big scale



exhibition of Buson's paintings. It is not only Buson's works that are hard to encounter. So many old art works are privately owned in Japan, and therefore it is extremely difficult to organize a grand-scale art exhibition.

As for my experience, it was 30 years ago when I last saw a good deal of Buson's paintings. I was only 26 years old, and when I was 30, I wrote a thesis about Buson's haiku to earn a master's degree.

At that time, I felt, "Thank goodness. Now that I completed this thesis, I don't have to keep remembering all these things about Buson. I can even forget everything about him."

Forget? No — you cannot forget the person that you chose to write about for your thesis, just like you can never forget the girl you loved in high school. It stays in your heart all your life. You cannot escape it. But, I must admit that I have half forgotten about him. I have read other authors, I have looked at other painters' works. At times, I was busy traveling in Japan or outside the country.

But, this time, I felt that Buson was really calling to me to come. And perhaps, this would be the last chance for me to see him. Or, at least, there would be no other exhibition as inclusive as this one in my lifetime.

The following day, I took a train to Osaka. About 20 minutes after the train left Kyoto, it slowly crossed the bridge over the River Uji. Just below this bridge, the river meets another river called Yodo.

Buson wrote a poem about these two rivers:

## SLOW-RIVER SONG, IN THREE PARTS

(Denga-Ka)

[The woman speaks, in the style of a Chinese poem]

Spring water with plum blossom petals afloat

flows southward and the Reedy River meets the Slow-River.

You, please do not unfasten my brocade bindings, with the quick rapids the boat will go as lighting.

Reedy waters meet slow waters, joining together they are the same as one body, I desire to recline in the boat with you and be a person of Naniwa for a long time.

[The man speaks, in the style of a Japanese poem]

You are like plum blossoms on water,

blossoms floating on water are quick to pass by.

I am like a willow tree beside the river.

My shadow sinks into the water and cannot follow you.

This poem is a little erotic. In this work, we see a place named Naniwa. This is the old name for Osaka, where I was heading. Also, Osaka is where Buson was born.

My train soon passed by a town called Hashimoto. This reminded me of a haiku by the same poet:

Young bamboo!

At Hashimoto, the harlot, is she still there or not?





I dozed off for what seemed to be a few minutes. The train's moderate speed and its gentle vibration made me drowsy. Did I doze off for only a few minutes? Perhaps, it was much longer. Even after I woke up once, I fell half asleep. Before I realized it, my train reached the terminal station. I was in a downtown station of Osaka. From there, I took a subway train to get to the museum.

The exhibition was overwhelming. The paintings there included some



pieces that I had seen elsewhere. But more pieces than I had never seen were shown. What struck me most was that several paintings had the theme of a hermit and hermitage. This, of course, comes from the ancient Chinese idealism of an artistic, philosophical hermit life in the mountains.

After Buson wandered around many different places in Japan in his youth, he settled in a central part of Kyoto. He worked hard to support himself and his family (a wife and a daughter) through his career as a painter. But, deep in his heart, he always longed for a quiet life of a legendary poet-philosopher living in a remote mountainous area.

Also, as a painter, he was good at other themes such as animals, plants, and people.

His interests in these, of course, reflected in his poetry, which was written mostly in haiku form (The above-quoted "Slow-River Song" is one of the three poems that Buson wrote in non-haiku form).

Haiku is much shorter, as in the following examples:

To my eyes it is delightful —

the fan of my beloved,  
completely white.

Moon in the sky's center,  
Shabbiness on the village street —  
just passing through.

When the axe cuts in,  
surprise at the perfume —  
woods in winter.

Also, in the exhibition at the museum, there were fans. But they were not "completely white" as in the poem above. Buson painted pictures on the fans. In other works, he liked to put the moon in the sky. Not only "woods in winter," but also woods and forests in all the other

seasons depicted by Buson with several different techniques from one work to another.

The show in the museum included the first editions of many haiku books by Buson and his disciples. Also shown were several letters written by Buson to his friends. Yes — his letters. They are special — very warm-hearted and detailed. One of my favorites is as follows:

Your opinion that I should renounce the house of beauty is quite sensible, I think. According to your advice, today I shall give up my longing for Koito [geisha]. Because of my useless romantic feeling, I lost my dignity in my old age. I should forbid myself.

This is a letter written to Doryu, a friend of Buson, in 1780. It was a pity that this particular letter was not in the exhibit. This letter reminds me of a haiku by Buson:

An old man's love,  
while trying to forget it,  
a winter rainfall.

The letter was written when Buson was 64 years old, only three years before his death. We cannot be sure whether the young woman named Koito in the letter is the identical woman behind the scene of this haiku, because the haiku had been composed as many as six years before the letter was written.

Anyway, it may have been the same woman. Now I am 56 years old. I am getting close to the age when he wrote this letter.

I was brought back to the real world, when one of the guards of the museum called out the closing time loudly to the visitors in the hall where I was trying to decipher one of the Buson's letters in the exhibition.

When I went out of the museum



building, it was still light outdoors. I knew I must visit again in the next month, as some of the works exhibited in the April show would be replaced with other ones in May.

After concentrating my attention on the exhibits for some hours, I was somewhat tired. But, it was a happy kind of tired.

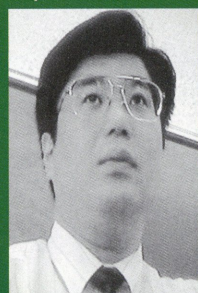
Note: All the writings by Buson quoted in this article are from the book, *Haiku Master Buson*, published by Heian International, Inc., Union City, Calif., 1978. All the illustrations in this article are from the catalogue, *Buson*, edited by Johei Sasaki and Masako Sasaki, published by The Asahi Shinbun, 2001.



# A new phase of the use of computers:

## A practical application for English learning & teaching in Japan

By Hirokazu Nishida



For two decades, English learning and teaching in schools in Japan has developed remarkably.

The traditional style of teaching foreign languages

in Japan was one based on reading texts and translating them into Japanese. Learning English meant translating it into Japanese for hundreds of years. And the present trend in the English-teaching method is the communicative one: focusing mainly on listening and speaking.

Nevertheless, this transition would not have happened without the development of various facilities for language teaching.

The first step was a language laboratory, developed in junior and senior high schools, colleges, and universities, more than 10 years ago. At first, this type of classroom was equipped with tape recorders and headphones, but had no special provisions for listening training. Not all teachers had the experience to effectively use the laboratory. Then the laboratory came equipped with audio-visual systems.

This created the second step in teaching English: the introduction of English-speaking individuals to Japan's classrooms. At this time, Japan's economic bubble was inflating, and many native English speakers came in waves. It was not uncommon for students to talk with these English-speaking individuals on campuses, or to study abroad. Yet, this trend in Japan quickly faded

when the economic bubble burst.

Though the number of the students who study abroad has decreased this decade, the number of English-speaking teaching staff has continued to gradually increase, and the desire to study abroad among students has never withered.

Nevertheless, there are many students struggling to become fluent in English. The opportunities, though, to have the experience to speak with English-speaking individuals, are fewer in the students' daily lives.

The computer has begun to effectively fill this gap using its virtual

*The traditional style of teaching foreign languages in Japan was one based on reading texts and translating them into Japanese. Learning English meant translating it into Japanese for hundreds of years.*

world. The computer offers students an equivalent real-world experience, and gives them a proper course of study. When students prepare to take the TOEIC test, they easily discover their weak points by taking trial tests. Many universities and colleges have introduced CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) equipment.

In the first step, computers are the virtual teachers. One of the benefits for Japanese students is that they can have speaking and listening experiences with virtual speakers as

their target language any time they choose. The other is that teachers can easily adjust the material to a student's level to make lessons more effective.

The next stage is coming with the Internet. Most of the CALL rooms are now connected to the Internet to research the latest information on the Web. They can use the online training rooms for various languages on many Web sites. This learning style is not popular yet, partly because connecting with the Internet is not a permanent manner that is common in the United States and Europe. Despite this disadvantage, many seem to think CALL classes should be used to search the Web and collect information. This would enable students to train for reading and writing skills rather than listening and speaking skills.

Computers are filling every teaching field in Japan. Most public schools, including elementary schools, have computer rooms where students can use computers at one time. Yet software development has not kept up with the schools' demand. Some use electronic dictionaries in their class activities, while others use HTML techniques to build English homepages. By using the Internet, real-time communication around the world is provided, and many students have an interest and are excited by the quick responses from the real world far away from their native land.

For this, many teachers draw their attention to the function of the network including the Internet. Various methods of CALL are combined into the traditional teaching method. One reason is that although the Internet can motivate





students, there seems to be a need for more concrete targets or training, which helps students know their skill levels. Without realizing their skill level, class activities cannot effectively help students acquire language use for communication. English is a foreign language for most people in Japan, and they can live without it without any trouble. This means the acquisition of foreign languages, not only English, but other languages. To keep students motivated to progress to the next training level, what is needed is a new way to get knowledge or interest the students.

CALL can provide students various types of language skill training by not only using the Internet, but in the closed networking environment.

As above, one of the merits of CALL is its multimedia abilities, so to combine its networking abilities, the class activities in the CALL room can be more intensive in language skill training. The "multimedia" here means that students use two or more senses simultaneously in their language class activities.

Students can read a text that scrolls on the computer screen while listening to it. Or, while listening to some texts or watching video clips, students can answer questions. Then, they search and collect the new information on the Internet. These two steps in one class activity can keep students interested in English.

Through Internet research, students can acquire more reading skills, but when they face trouble, they are given the information about online utilities, like dictionaries and maps, that can be used free. This information is important, especially for the students who think they are weak in English.

There are original computer programs designed to fit the students' level of English. The most important part of fitting this level is the speed of the moving text and its sound. The motion of the text can be controlled much easier than that of the sound.

Script languages help to make Web sites interactive.

In Japan, it has been advocated for a long time to use the natural speed voice for training or listening to English. This method is right, but the result is not always good: many students who have no particular purpose for English study cannot keep up with these exercises. The reason is still not clear, but some Web sites show some hints. The site ([www.ktv.co.jp/ARUARU/search/arueikaiwa/eikaiwa2.htm](http://www.ktv.co.jp/ARUARU/search/arueikaiwa/eikaiwa2.htm)) says the frequency range of the Japanese voice is about half as wide as that of English. When compared to other languages, the Japanese range is low and narrow. This may be one of the causes for the Japanese not being good at listening to English: many sounds of higher frequency in the English of native speakers are only noise to an average Japanese ear.

Now computer technology, especially in the applied field of language translation and sound treatment, is quickly developing in Japan. Kyoto has another face that attracts attention from around the world. Nintendo, the world famous computer game manufacturer, and many other electronic manufacturers like Omuron, originated in Kyoto. Most of their headquarters are still in Kyoto.

Among other things, the most noteworthy is a complex institutional area for studies on science and technology in the southern suburbs of Kyoto called "Kansai-Gakken-Toshi." In this area, many institutions, both private and public, study frontier technology for information and digitization by computer. One company has been studying the voice recognition system and its application for an experimental robot similar to the Kismet Program at MIT. It is hoped this type of robot becomes a partner in teaching foreign languages. Another applied research connecting with cognitive science is now developing an automatic mutual language

translation system that works simultaneously on the telephone and the Internet.

When this system comes into wide use in the near future, will we be free from the enduring burden of foreign language learning and teaching? Many people in Japan may hope so, perhaps, but it is nonsense to say that we will have no need to learn any foreign language to communicate with each other and conduct business in the face of globalization.

Although help from computers or automatic language translating systems will become important in daily life, the most important part for communication is the human mind and its intelligence to make judgments without prejudice. For this ideal, the first step is that we understand each other without any discrimination. This can be realized by overcoming language barriers.

We should not let the computer or other machines do these intelligent tasks for us. We should make good use of them to help in our tasks and should not depend on them in all aspects. Nowadays, the relationship between humans and computers has been changing from machine and user to master and man. This change has happened according to the rapid development of computer performance. Through this development, many people are embarrassed and could not find how to cope with newly developed machines.

We should realize that both computers and the developing translating systems are always assistants or helpers to ease our tasks. But whether they become so or not depends on our own attitude. Therefore, when we establish a new relationship between computers and ourselves, a new phase of computer assisted language learning comes true.

Strangely enough, the name of CALL can be an acronym for this idea: Computers Assist our Language Learning.



# Globalizing a capital city: Dialectic of old & new in Kyoto

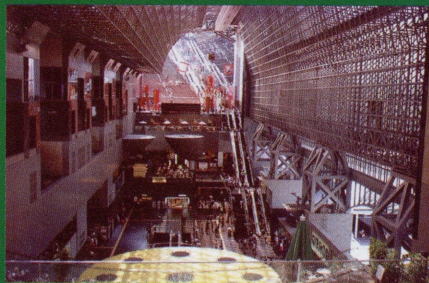
By Shinya Matsuoka



Most people know Kyoto as the 1,200 year old, cultural capital of Japan. It is famous for its old temples and shrines, Zen gardens and traditional architecture.

However, Kyoto is a city in transition between the old and the new, and perhaps, this juxtaposition of old and new is something that has always characterized the city.

An example of this is the new station designed by Hiroshi Hara and Atelier Phi, Kyoto Station. In order to get to the old temples, most people



enter Kyoto through this station. It has a post-modern, futuristic design, including a huge steel, arched bridge construction as its facade. It looks something like one of the battle cruisers from *Star Wars*.

Also, as a post-modernistic building, the layout is quite confusing. There is something of an M.C. Escher quality to the many staircases and observation platforms. As a local, one soon finds one's way around, but presumably, many people using the station are tourists who have never been to Kyoto before. To enter Kyoto through this

station is to already be confronted with the strange dialectic of old and new, inside and out, that characterizes the city

The early 1980s in Japan saw a flourish of anthropological study, which relied on the post-structuralism that thrived in France at the time. One of the representatives of such a theoretical anthropology was Yamaguchi Masao, who was more or less influenced by the dialectic schema of inside and outside, first proposed by Julia Kristeva as a general model to analyze a particular cultural group. Kristeva's design is clearly understood as a pioneering attempt to grasp the reality of one culture, intact within the dynamics of its social activities. It opposes the static abstractions and reductive procedures characteristic of the previous generation of anthropological research. It denies that a culture can be comprehended as a self-enclosed circulation of information and products within the spatio-temporal environment, which belongs to the cultural group. In contrast, the new standpoint emphasizes that culture or social activities of a group are not self-sufficient. It does not make a closed system, but rather, it is always and already energized by incessant contacts with external forces, and as a cultural group one should internalize the mechanism that constantly takes in energy from outside, in order to maintain itself. What essentially defines culture, advocates of the new theory contend, is the ceaseless interrelations with the outside.

That such a theory could flourish

in Japan is remarkable because Japan is usually regarded as the culture that closed itself off from the world for nearly 300 years. Though Japan has opened up in many ways since the Meiji Restoration (1868), the boundaries and passageways between the indigenous and the alien remain problematic.

A Japanese novelist, Oe Kenzaburo, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1994, has been influenced by Masao's work. A fairly typical case of the artistic adaptation of Masao's theory is *Dojidai Game*. The story is set in a country village that is modeled after Kenzaburo's hometown in the mountain ravines of Shikoku. What should be noticed here is the recalling of an indigenous landscape only where a general theory can become applicable to concrete dramatic events and human relations. We can regard this as an application, though it looks like a somewhat perverted example, of inside/outside dialectic. On occasion, he says he has learned from William Faulkner the following method: to choose a limited place as the setting for several different stories where the same characters appear again and again to make up one whole story.

Once we accept the hypothesis that every community, in its nature, opens itself to external force, successive and persistent observations toward a microcosm come to be a legitimate way of investigation into the universal nature of human being and human activities. The dialectic theories of inside and outside teach us that the minute elaboration of a particular situation is the only means to reach



the universal, and ironically we are allowed to dispense with direct description from an external perspective.

Kyoto provides a good case study for this line of anthropological discourse. A folklore scholar, Kamatsu Kazuhiko, following Masao's argument, has introduced a series of new concepts, which use the perspectives of "strangers" for the historical study of the Japanese Medieval period. He points out there were other histories formed by forgotten aliens, behind the authoritative history made and recorded by the people who held power at the time. He chooses the word "ogre" to name these strangers who surely participated in Japanese history. In fact, in historical documents and stories (most of them were written by aristocratic people who were in the halls of power) we often notice the repetitive usage of certain kinds of words such as "ogre" and "specter." He says these are stereotyped, negative images of the kinds of people who lose wars against those in power and were exiled from society because they were supposed to be threats to the powerful. Furthermore, he explains that the way the powerful maintain their power is to separate out dangerous people by exclusion, and at the same time, to absorb them within the structure of power itself, pushing them into a state of powerlessness. These situations show up saliently on a topological structure of a capital city where those in power sit. The urban space of Kyoto had been the center of power for a long time in the early history of Japan.

The thesis of Kazuhiko's argument is that Kyoto is a city systematically constructed to form a micro cosmos. The city represents the whole empire it controls, and, being aware of the existence of ogres inside and outside the city, it has a structural pattern crafted to defend itself against supposed attacks by the opposition.

As it was designed after Changan, which was the capital of the Tang Dynasty in China, Heian-Kyo (city of peace) adopted the Chinese philosophy of "four gods correspond" within its architectural concepts. According to the idea, there should be a mountain on the north of a city, where an imaginary animal, *genbu* (a composite of turtle and snake), lives. On the east, there must be a gentle stream of pure water because it is necessary if a dragon is to live there. Further, there should be a big road on the west for a tiger, and in the southern area a large pond provides a resting place for *suzaku* (a colorful bird). All these are requirements for building a capital. If Kyoto really wants to be protected by these four animals, still holding the cosmology of ancient times, we may be able to discern a strange mood, something like magic rituals, in the depth of this city's architectural design.

Superficially, the organization of the urban area seems to be geometrical: avenues crisscrossing the central area like a chessboard, and smaller straight streets connecting one avenue with another. Furthermore, in this city, most of the streets are named after a particular social activity and profession that people living there engaged in, for example "oil street" or "salt street."

This layout is so rational that we feel compelled to look for some shadowy scheme beneath the surface. A good place to look for this irrationality is in the division of social classes indicated by the names of streets and neighborhoods.

For example, industries like shoemaking and butchery were occupied by relatively lower classes. The reason is that these occupations



were deemed as base and undesirable for a long time because they involved the slaughter of cows, which in the traditional religion was seen as a defilement of nature.

Consequently, most people did not want to get involved with this possible religious transgression and the work was left to the socially disdained people. These occupations concerned with defilement and death were concentrated within the eastern part of the city along the Kamo River partly because people had a mythic idea that the stream of



water carries away accumulated defilements

A thousand years later, these neighborhoods remain some of the poorest in the city despite the fact that their riverfront location would seem to make them prime targets for development. Upstream from this area, riverfront land is the most expensive in the city.

Because of its geometrical layout, Kyoto has clearly separated boundaries. Its northern limit is bounded by First Avenue (Ichi-jyo), and the southern extension is bordered by Ninth Avenue (Ku-jyo). Also, the eastern side of the city was separated by East Kyogoku Avenue and the western side by West







Kyogoku Avenue. Outside of this area, is another world, and the people living on or near these borders lead a kind of marginal existence passing between both worlds. Toribeno was the name for a part of the eastern bank area of the Kamo River, which was the funeral place of citizens. Half secular, half sacred priests conventionally called Hijiri who also played a role as musicians, performed all of the funerals. Even at the present time, we can see the remains of this kind of social segregation. In areas around Ninth Avenue there are still a good number of foreign Asian people. These people represent the holy and the defiled simultaneously because they belong to both the inside and outside. Repressed, socially discriminated classes were pushed into these border regions, to produce an ideological margin to divide the inside, which should be protected from the outside. According to Kazuhiko, that is one of the reasons why many temples, well known even to foreign tourists, were built mainly on the east and north sides of the city.

The names of many streets, denoting the social activities and occupations of different areas,



prompt us to confirm a still functioning system of signs in Kyoto.

What is hidden beneath the rational surface of the city is the social division cunningly planned by succeeding, invisible powers. We might expect longtime inhabitants to be well aware of the deep coding of the neighborhoods. However, this turns out to be a romantic fantasy. I interviewed quite a number of taxi

drivers who were born in Kyoto, but to my surprise, most of them did not know the origins of place names that I — an outsider — know from reading books about Kyoto. Maybe, this is not a surprising thing. The reality of present Kyoto is somewhere else, outside of the cosmological model of selection and exclusion.

The old historical divisions of the city exist as abstractions; the modern division of neighborhoods depends on the quality of concrete used to build modern apartment blocks.

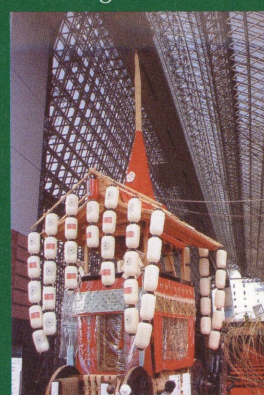
In fact, the traditional scenery of Kyoto is rapidly being destroyed. One of the forces is the development of modern apartment buildings, built with the hope of luring young students or workers who come from outside Kyoto. Because of the inheritance tax structure, most families are forced to turn over their land to real estate development banks that build these apartment buildings. In this way, the traditional wood-framed, tile-roofed houses that once defined Kyoto are systematically replaced by low-quality, concrete apartment blocks. Since World War II, more than 100,000 traditional houses have been torn down in the center of Kyoto.

Is Kyoto becoming a modern city? Has traditional Kyoto seen its last days? Or, is the juxtaposition of old and new the essential characteristic that has defined this city from the beginning? Kyoto, as a historical city, is now a world-famous sightseeing attraction with a peculiar logic about old and new.

I visited Paris in 1984 with a group tour led by a French guide who spoke Japanese. He told us about the argument between Parisians when the Pompidou Center opened. The point of this argument, he said, was whether such an eccentrically modern building was suitable within the atmosphere of Paris; some people felt disgust because they thought the

new building disturbed the harmonic beauty of Paris. The same thing happened when the Eiffel Tower was under construction. To introduce a new design into the existing order of a classical city should be more or less an intentional act done to cause a revolutionary movement within older arrangements.

Compared to this, the way Kyoto juxtaposes old and new seems to be rather casual. In front of Kyoto Station where enormous numbers of tourists go in and out incessantly, the



special appearance of an awful kitsch tower, Kyoto Tower, is like a Western candle. Also, the station itself has futuristic designs, including a

huge steel-arched bridge construction as its facade. One of the recent fads in Kyoto are Italian restaurants that have been built in traditional frame houses called Machi-ya.

Furthermore, some new buildings have been built imitating the



traditional style, so that it is difficult to tell which were old and which new.

There are various sides of present Kyoto. Of course, with its many temples and

remaining traditional areas, Kyoto is likely the most important tourist attraction in Japan. Today, Kyoto officials put increasing importance on presenting the city as a college town.





Through preservation, old things become something other than what they were that attracts refreshed attention from outside persons. Historically, schools in Kyoto started as temple schools where education was mainly directed for the benefit of the poor.

Once given this perspective, we shall notice that Kyoto, from the beginning, has been constantly taking in the force to evolve forward from various dynamic conflicts between different races, and different social classes.

In the Heian-era, a considerable number of Koreans occupied influential positions in the government. Ryoan-ji is now deemed as one of the foremost representatives of Zen Buddhist art, but only with the aid of anonymous artisans, most of them surely belonging to a socially discriminated class, could the temple be fabricated. It is often said that Kyoto has a snobbishly sophisticated culture that was cultivated through its long history, and it is an exclusive, homogeneous kind of culture. However, we can say Kyoto was always a hybrid, heterogeneous place where many kinds of international and intercultural communication took place.



The origin of Ryukoku University was a small temple school for priests of Shin-Buddhism, which opened 360 years ago. During the time from the Sengoku-era (about



1450~1597) to the early Edo period (1597-1868), the Shin-Buddhist group experienced succeeding hardships because poor farmers made up the majority of the group and many of them were often in rebellion against the powers of the time. Balancing between believers and government to sustain a peaceful condition was the most difficult thing to manage for the leaders of the group. I would like to understand the meaning of Shinran's words, who was the founder of this school, against such social backgrounds of the time. He emphasizes the difference of "way to" and "way home," and these are extensive metaphors to explain the necessary step to wisdom; we have to go back to the state of ordinary people that is next to ignorance after having reached omniscient knowledge (Satori).

This may show a typical short circuit between particularity and universality proposed by Buddhist thinking and many modern philosophers in Western countries were certainly inspired by the encounter with this kind of Eastern thought. East and West became closer because of the development of communication by using trains,

ships, and cars, and it provided Western thinkers with dramatic occasions to meet the East. These matters form a noted field in the history of ideas in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

If the chance to find a way to the universal, that Buddhism in a wider sense searches for, lies in the difficulty of maintaining solidarity, with affirmation of diverse substances as

they are, I would naturally give thought, to some analogy with Deleuze and Guattari's discourse about singular and universal which is repeatedly discussed in their works such as *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.

I became acquainted with Kyoto as a university student and through a strong interest in American literature and culture. I read modern critical theories, which made me first realize the possibilities of Buddhist thought in larger contexts: the social, cultural, and political circumstances of the present time.

"Living together in diversity," a slogan of one Shin-Buddhist school, expresses the correspondence with the multicultural social situation under the globalizing influence, and we have this opportunity to write about Kyoto for the *International Crossroads* series at Missouri Southern partly because it will be a part of the curious coincidence of old and new, East and West, that I have discussed so far. Notions like interdisciplinary or coexistent are important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and Kyoto surely has the capability to embrace them with ease, and within its long-established cultural environment.



# Traditional business management — Functions of corporate staff

By Yoshihiko Takaoka



Kyoto is said to be a city of traditional arts, sightseeing, and colleges. This is true, but there are many business entities as well, including headquarters of

several world enterprises.

During the day, the city's center is busy with tourists and students, but in the evening, office workers visit bars and restaurants in the area to relax over a few glasses of beer or wine. This also provides a good opportunity to exchange pieces of business information, which are useful for formal meetings the following day.

It may sound strange but office workers very seldom visit restaurants or bars with people in their neighborhood. They are more closely related to corporations than their communities.

In the Japanese business circle, jobs are assigned to sections or departments. Jobs are not assigned to individuals. Consequently, capable workers can expand the job size or range as much as they want as long as their colleagues do not complain too much. There is no concept of "job" or "job grade" in Japan.

As the job concept is loose and vague in Japan, it is easy to change the company organization or reshuffle personnel whenever needed. These changes are made much more frequently in Japan. In addition, major organization changes and personnel reshuffling are periodically made once a year or so at the beginning of each year.

In the United States, a job has a grade and the job grade has a corresponding salary. In Japan, each individual has a personal grade according to the seniority and capability of an individual. The personal grade, not job grade, has the corresponding salary. Salary is

*It may sound strange but office workers very seldom visit restaurants or bars with people in their neighborhood. They are more closely related to corporations than their communities.*

primarily determined by the personal grade, and is expanded every two to three years with the salary increasing accordingly. This procedure used to be called an "escalator system" and has worked efficiently. As this is somewhat outdated, however, it is currently being reviewed to reflect the responsibility of job more directly.

In Japan, business decisions are made through discussions in a meeting with all people involved in attendance. All attendees are invited to openly express their opinions. The decision is made as a consensus through discussions in which all people participate. Once decisions are made, they are put into practice immediately and smoothly as all people are informed of the decision-

making process.

When a decision looks like it had a good result, many collaborators from other sections of the company come to help and assist with the project to make it more positive and innovative. This is possible because the job concept is not strictly defined, and this helps the project succeed and the company to prosper.

A well-designed report is sometimes presented to a decision-making committee. A few staff members who are well experienced in the business practices of the corporation prepare this report in advance. The report analyzes the merits and demerits of a scenario, reviews circumstances, and involves a variety of opinions. This is beneficial and timesaving to reach a good decision. The meeting studies the report in detail and approves it with revisions when necessary.

In Japan, a manager responsible for decision-making has a staff to prepare this type of report. Presidents have their own staff support. This group is called the corporate administration office or president's office. The office members hold regular meetings with the president and try to work out well-balanced presentations through intensive discussions and analyses among staff members.

Employees in the company respect the staff members because their contribution is remarkable. Employees are collaborative with the staff in analyzing and evaluating a project. The staff is proud to be a member of the group, if the staff continues to provide good propositions, they will be able to contribute to the prosperity of the company in the following years.



The staff organization consists of the most capable and experienced employees in their 30s or 40s from various company functions. In Japan, this organization is believed to be important to restructure a company toward the right direction. When a staff member returns to their original function after completing their responsibility as a staff member, this particular person is, in some cases, promoted to a higher position and becomes responsible for a wider range of group activities.

The corporate management committee or executive committee, consists of several top and executive managers, including the president, and makes major business decisions. This committee approves, or sometimes disapproves, a report, which is prepared by the corporate administration office and presented

to the committee, after deliberate discussion among the committee members. In many cases, the corporate management committee does not make a decision that was not anticipated by the staff. In this way, it is essentially the corporate staff and not the president or corporate management committee that determines the future of a company. The more aggressive and superior the staff group, the brighter the company's future looks. A big company usually has an aggressive and innovative staff organization.

In this context, presidents of major Japanese corporations are elected from the elderly and senior managers who can adjust different thoughts among divisions in a proper manner. A leader of marked personality is not necessarily needed in many cases because he is not

required to lead the company by himself. Presidents are capable, well educated, and respected by many people. But they are not expected to act on their own authority too strongly.

For the past 50 or 60 years, this traditional but efficient business management was one of the key factors for dynamic growth and expansion of the Japanese economy. Unfortunately, during the past 10 years, the Japanese economy has not grown as expected. But executive managers together with the staff groups are desperately trying to improve and restructure the business system.

It is expected the Japanese economy will regain its dynamic power and energy and lead a global economy to a better course, without a doubt, in the near future.



*The author with his German colleagues in Frankfurt.*





Continued from page 27

*okotowari*. This system prevents customers from having to experience *ozashiki*, so the foundation becomes a mediator and introduces customers to *chaya*. Other restaurants or hotels in Kyoto serve lunch or dinner with *maiko*, and can give a banquet more easily than before.

Furthermore, individuals can experience wearing the *maiko's* kimono and wig. Recently, this writer tried to transformed into a *maiko* and walked around the area of Gion for about 10 or 15 minutes. The hotel was Pension Gion with a room called "Maiko no Heya" (Maiko's room) that introduces

*maiko* costumes, traditions, or events in Hanamachi to tourists.

The mistress of the hotel was born into a *maiko* family line many generations old, and she herself was a *maiko*. However, her daughter did not become a *maiko*, so the mistress rents the costumes to tourists who can enjoy wearing the *maiko's* kimono. One customer even became a *maiko* after her experience, and today, she is the second most popular *maiko* in Gion.

While the mistress made up this writer, she discussed *maiko*. She said the world of the *maiko* is strict, especially, the dance training. The hotel mistress said the *maiko* were treated differently than ordinary

dance students. Until they perform the dance perfectly, they must perform it again and again. Girls born in Gion have to decide whether to become a *maiko* or not when they are 6 years old. When the daughter of the mistress said she didn't want to be a *maiko*, the mistress agreed because she did not want her daughter to have the same tough life she had lived.

The mistress said her granddaughter wanted to be a *maiko*, and was looking forward to her future. Some Hanamachi have a problem with the lack of successors to the *maiko*. In the future, it may be difficult to preserve this traditional beauty in Kyoto.

Continued from page 31

recitation of the Three Refuges and the Creed of Shin-Buddhism. The presidential priest of our sect, *monshu*, carried out the "laying on of hands."

He laid a fake knife on our heads as a symbolical and formal tonsure. Since we had already taken an actual *tonsure* the day before, this was, of course, a pretense. But, it was the authorized one.

Following this, we expressed our Buddhist faith by reciting the Three Refuges.

As Buddhists, we believe in the Three Treasures: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Samgha, and we recited in chorus the following:

*Namo-Kie-Butsu*

(I take refuge in the Buddha)

*Namo-Kie-Ho*

(I take refuge in the Dharma)

*Namo-Kie-So*

(I take refuge in the Samgha)

We also recited the Creed of Shin-Buddhism as a declaration that we are to be a Shin-Buddhist. We knelt on the floor and read sentences of the creed with one voice. This voice, expressing our faith and resolution as a Buddhist and Shin-Buddhist, resounded through the temple.

The solemn process was performed at dusk. After the ceremony, we received a Buddhist name. It is a moment of another birth. We are born into the world of the Buddha-

Dharma so as to launch-out into a new life as a Buddhist monk.

I was strongly impressed by the training program and the ordination ceremony. I have never before had a deeper faith than during that period. Moreover, I met many good Buddhist comrades in this program. They also inspired me. Now, I really appreciate them, Buddhism, and our life. Thus, the *tokudo* ordination was a meaningful and unforgettable experience.

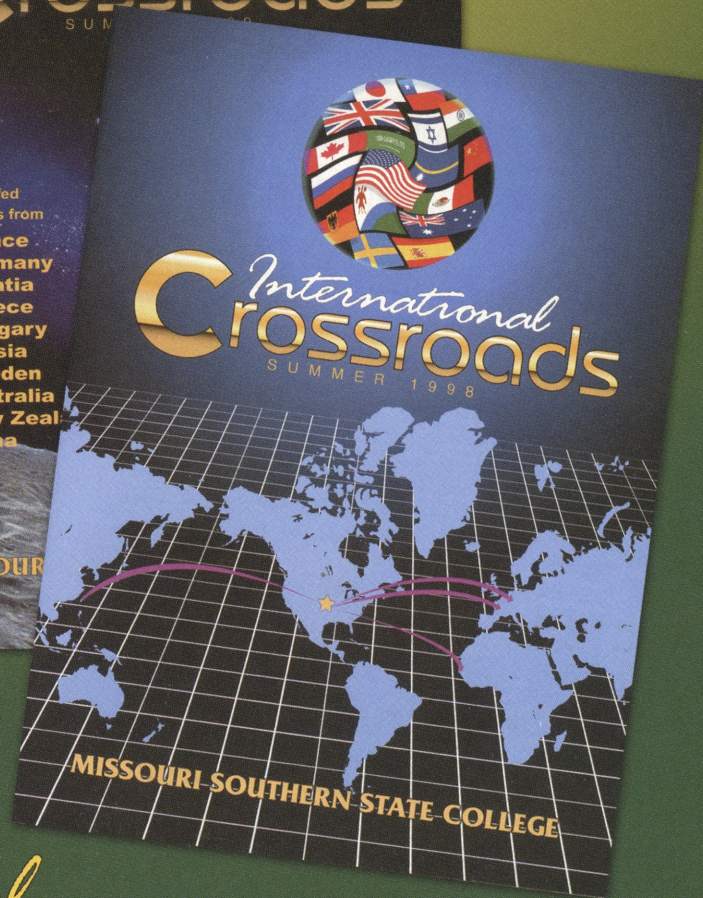
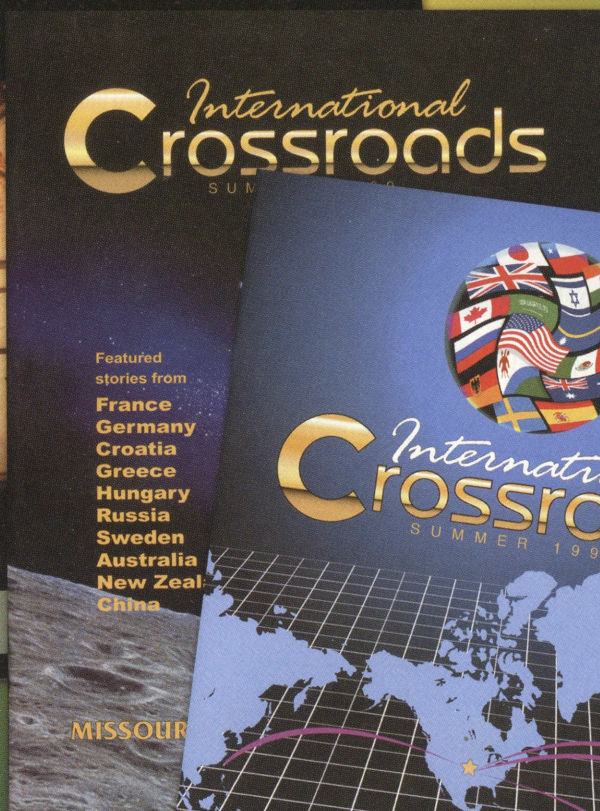
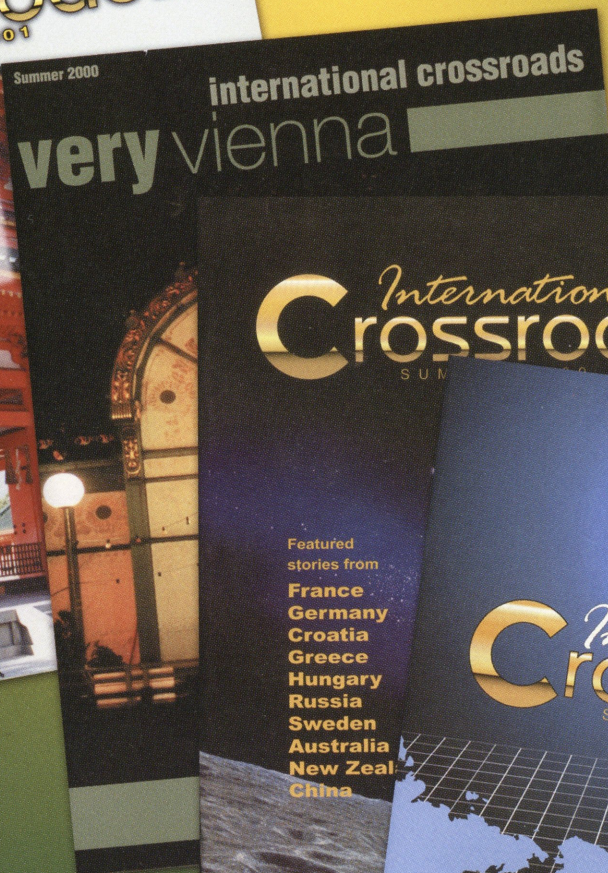
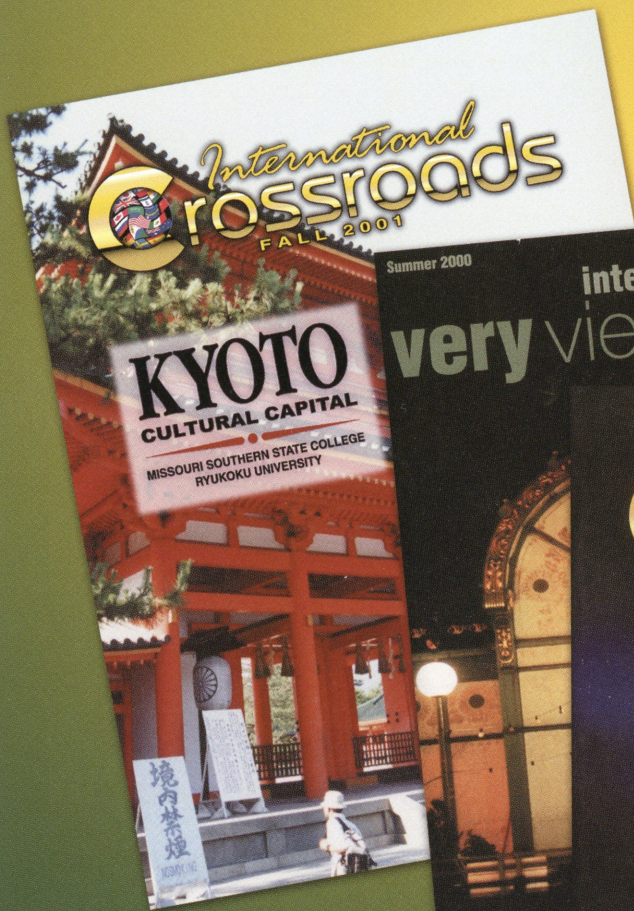
The Hongwanji International Center opened a special training program for candidates from overseas several years ago. It enabled them to receive the *tokudo* ordination. So, if you are interested and ready, why not try it?



The shrine, Heian Jingu

Shoji Shimizu



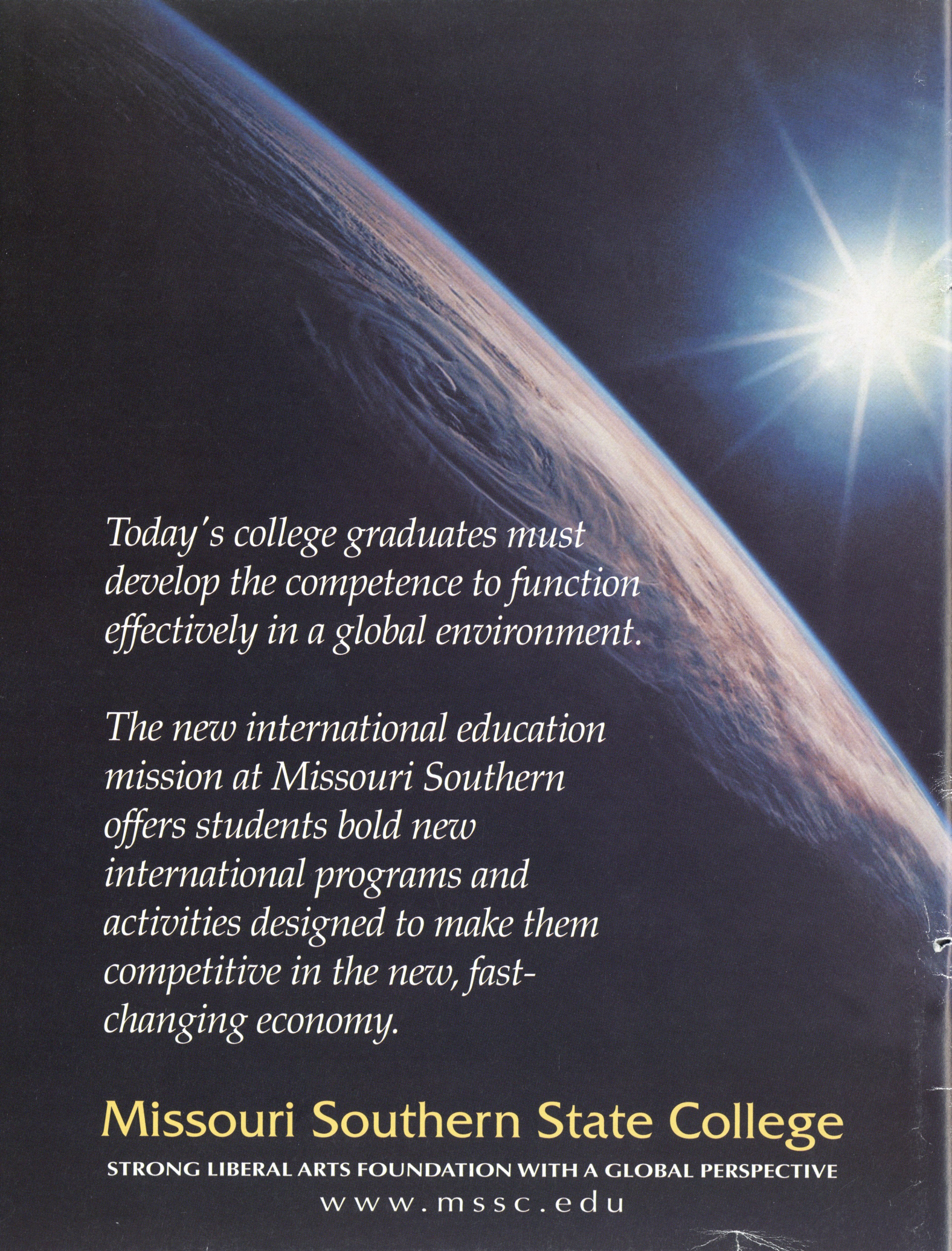


**International  
Crossroads**

& Missouri Southern State College

**Making A World of Difference**





*Today's college graduates must develop the competence to function effectively in a global environment.*

*The new international education mission at Missouri Southern offers students bold new international programs and activities designed to make them competitive in the new, fast-changing economy.*

**Missouri Southern State College**

STRONG LIBERAL ARTS FOUNDATION WITH A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

[www.mssc.edu](http://www.mssc.edu)